大学通識

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香港中文大學鄭承峰通識教育研究中心
Baldwin Cheng Research Centre for General Education,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Foreword

The speed at which information expands and knowledge get updated today is overwhelming. Of all the choices that dazzle like frenzied blooms, the classics have acquired an existence that is both familiar and remote, longed for but not quite understood. The classics are those that have survived the tests and selections of history. Though the time and space where they first emerged are remote to us, their influences are lasting. They are still inspirational to our lives, our ideals, our beliefs and our thinking today. For general education, reading classics is clearly of utmost importance to the achievement of its ideals, for it is a valuable entry point for whole person education, for inquiry into the essence of things, for inducing students to think about big questions like society, nature and ethics—all these what general education pursues.

Journal of General and Liberal Education previously introduced the General Education Foundation Programme of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), a programme that was piloted in 2009 and fully implemented in 2012 to all freshmen under its four-year curriculum. For this issue, our special topic is "Reading Classics and General Education Programme." We invited three universities of different natures yet all implementing classics reading programmes to discuss the following two questions: 1) the importance of reading classics to the fulfillment of general education ideals; 2) their practical experience in classics reading as formal curriculum.

Grant Franks is a veteran teacher at St. John's College. He tells the story of the college's early development and the ideals and practice of its distinctive classics education today. Established in 1693 during the colonial age, St. John's College is one of the oldest higher education institutes in the United States. Through many historical changes in the past three decades, especially with a number of major education reforms in modern and contemporary times, the St. John's curriculum system has evolved to be distinct from the rest of American higher education in general. There is no majoring in its undergraduate curriculum, neither are there electives. All programmes embark on classic works and teachers and students learn together through seminars and tutorials. While specialization tends to neglect the integration of students' ideals for life and their values, the College's alternative practice in classics education can certainly be seen as a "strike back" to such fragmentation. As Franks points out, the most important objective of studying classics is to allow students to have freedom of the mind and an inquisitive attitude towards the world.

As a vibrant city of commercial and technological innovations in Asia, Singapore attaches great importance to its technological education. Such also is the mission of the newly founded Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). Casey Hammond is one of the designers of its core texts programme. He also discusses the impacts of "professionalization" and "globalization" on contemporary higher education. Hammond's concern is, whether factors like media and globalization promote or debilitate understanding of human experiences in their own situation. This is also the objective of their core texts programme: through the study of classics, students learn about the different phenomena, cultures and experiences in human

history, and from there, critical thinking is cultivated. To make it relevant to a migrant country that is constituted by different races and ethnicities, SUTD's core texts programme includes classics drawn from four different cultures, namely, the Western, Chinese, Indian and Islamic. Hammond describes how, through reading, writing and discussing these classics, the students are invited to look at the world through a lens different from the fashionable "globalization" theory.

The last article of the special topic comes from Chen I-ai of Tunghai University in Taiwan. One of the core people behind the general education reform at Tunghai, she discusses the process of setting up a classics reading general education programme at the university. It was remarkable to contrast how the university had no certainty of the reception at the start and the excellent reception the programme received across the board after its launch. Our readers with similar experience may resonate with this journey, while institutions interested in developing classics reading programmes will find it useful reference. Tunghai's particularly rich programme comprises of content from their faculties of arts, social sciences and creative arts. Another noteworthy feature is how general education is extended to daily life in the university. For example, a "Study Alcove" is set up in a corner of a Tang Dynasty-styled courtyard, where students and teachers have dialogues on humanity, general education activities are held, and the learning and cultural atmosphere of the campus is enhanced.

All three articles share the same concerns, which are, in today's world where professionalization and technology are highlighted, how humanistic education can be realized and what its expectations are. They also all address the importance of classroom discussion between teachers and students in the

study of classics. Be it the veteran in classic education as St John's College, or the new comer in core curriculum as SUTD, or the reformer as Tunghai University whose general education underwent a makeover, small class discussion has been adopted to promote active thinking and a habit of raising questions.

A good programme is a necessary condition to the success of general education, but it still has to be complemented by quality teaching. In the section "Teaching and Learning in General Education," Lam Chiu Ying, former director of the Hong Kong Observatory and adjunct professor of CUHK, Ng Kai Chiu from the Department of Philosophy of the same university, Martha Franks, tutor from St. John's College, and Hu Kexian of the School of Chinese Language and Culture of Zhejiang University, share their teaching experiences. Lam teaches a course titled "Climate, Energy & Life," which integrates the issues of environment, resources and human activities. It discusses profound questions like "do individuals have absolute freedom in a city?" as well as reflects on the role of ethics in human evolution.

Ng Kai Chiu explores a core question of general education, which is—the possibility and practice of value education—through the examples of his two courses, "Outline of Chinese Culture" and "Freedom and Destiny," Ng first of all affirms the plurality of values and then compares between technical education and value education. From there, he concludes that value education is very trying exactly because of this pluralism. He then interprets the concept of "destiny" through the lens of different cultures. By "questioning the others and examining our own self," and with reference to different cultures, he proposes, we may help students develop a more mature value system of their own. Finally, he asserts that even though values are a thorny issue, one

must not simply shelve it. Such will only be an "empty tolerance," because "though it seems that today we can no longer find the most correct values, through dialogues, interchanges and self-examinations, we can find the more appropriate, more convincing value beliefs for ourselves."

Martha Franks tells us about her experience of and reflections on teaching law at the Affiliated High School of Peking University. As an "outsider" completely foreign to the Chinese culture, she describes in detail what she saw in this elite school in Beijing and also her uncertainties and self-examinations. In her course, she tried to link her observations to the course contents, e.g., the United States Constitution, separation of powers, land laws. In soil different from the Western value system, the results were interesting clashes with students' own conceptions. Such attempt requires courage and resolution both from the teacher and from the school. Of course, attention should be paid to the fact that the "international class" that Franks participated in is not for all students. Its contents are also unrelated to the National Higher Education Entrance Examination. It was a class offered to a dozen students who were preparing for entry exams for universities overseas.

Hu Kexian of the department of Chinese literature of Zhejiang University creates in his article a colorful world of Tang poetry. His course "Studies of Classics of Tang Poetry" aims to help students find temporary shelter in classical literature, away from the hustles and bustles of daily life, to rediscover the values that support them deep down in their hearts. As one of his students expressed, studying Tang poetry is a search for a "Tao", a way. It can contend against the pragmatic "Qi," the utensil, the use value, that most people seek after. Hu introduces approaches to appreciate Tang poetry that are both rich and artistic. For example, at a basic level, one can read it

in its phonetics, rhythm and genre. Or one can read deeper and contemplate on the choice of words and sentence structure. Lastly, with reference to other realms, e.g., cultural relics, painting and other literature, one can develop a dynamic and enriching approach to reading Tang poetry.

The last section of this issue of *Journal of General and Liberal Education* are responses to the last special topic. In the last issue, scholars from different parts of the world share their views on programme management of general education. Some opine that good communication of the whole team is essential. Some find that good leadership is the key. Liu Yiyu and Fan Dongping of the School of Public Administration, South China Normal University, studied the general education programme of CUHK. Using the Application of System Management Theory, they analyze the factors contributing to the programme's success. They also offer some observations and suggestions to the management and administration of general education programs in the Mainland China.

In this world overloaded with information, instead of forget and being forgotten in the currents, we hope that through these discussions on reading classics, general education teaching and general education programme design, we can reflect more on how humans can live better with the world, with the society and their own selves.

卷首語

當代社會資訊發達，知識更新速度之快，常令人產生應接不暇之感。在「亂花漸欲迷人眼」的各種選擇中，經典成為人們心中既熟悉又遙遠、既期盼又不甚了解的存在。經典是指那些經過歲月與歷史的洗禮、沉澱、甄別而流傳下來的思想著作，它們產生的時空雖然與我們相隔久遠，然而其影響經久不息，至今仍對人們的生活、理想、信念、思維有所啟發。顯然，經典閱讀對於達成通識教育理念至關重要，因為無論是通識教育所追求的全人教育、對事物本質問題的探究，抑或引導學生思考關於社會、自然、倫理等大問題，經典都可以提供很有價值的切入點。

香港中文大學自2009年起試辦閱讀經典的通識教育基礎課程，並在2012年全面推行至所有四年制入學的新生修讀，本刊過去亦有介紹。本期《大學通識》以「經典閱讀與通識教育課程」為專題，邀約三所性質迥異但都推行經典閱讀課程的大學，探討兩個問題：（1）經典閱讀對於達成通識教育理念的重要性；（2）經典閱讀在課程設置上的實踐經驗。

Grant Franks在St. John's College任教多年，他為我們敘述了學院的早期發展，以及該院現行極具特色的經典教育的理念與實踐。作為美國歷史最悠久的高等學府之一，St. John's College的成立可以追溯到1693年的殖民年代。經過數百年的歷史嬗變，尤其是近現代的幾次重大教育改革，現今的St. John's College逐步建立了不同於一般美國高等

教育的教育制度：本科教育不分專業、不設選修制、全部課程圍繞經典作品展開、師生以研習和導修的方式共同學習。由於專業教育往往忽略學生的人生理想與價值觀的整合，學院這種另類的經典教育實踐，無疑可以看作是對大學過於強調專業性而導致教育碎片化的「抗爭」。正如作者指出，學習經典最重要的目的，是讓學生獲得思想上的自由，以及對世界保持追問的態度。

新加坡是亞洲極具活力的商業和科技創新城市，一直十分重視國家的科學技術教育。新近成立的Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)，即以培養科學技術人才為己任。Casey Hammond是該大學通識教育核心課程（core texts）的設計人之一，同樣提到了當代高等教育受到「專業化」與「全球化」的衝擊。Hammond關心的問題是：媒體、全球化這些因素，對於理解人類自身的經驗和處境，究竟起到促進還是削弱的作用？而這也正是開設核心課程的目的所在——透過學習經典作品，了解人類歷史進程中的不同現象、文化及經驗，以培養學生批判性的思維能力。另外，由於新加坡是一個由不同族群構成的移民國家，Hammond為我們介紹了融合西方、中國、印度、伊斯蘭教四種不同文化經典作品的核心課程，讓學生通過閱讀、寫作和討論，以一種有異於現今流行的「全球化」理論的方式來看待和理解世界。

最後一篇專題文章分享的是臺灣東海大學經典閱讀通識課程的設立過程。作者陳以愛也是該校通識課程改革的核心人物之一。令人印象深刻的是，她提到學校最初創立經典課程時對其反響的毫無把握，到課程推出之後的廣受好評，這中間的過程或許能引起許多有過類似經驗的讀者所共鳴，也可以讓有意建立經典閱讀課程的院校所借鏡。由於該經典課程融合了文學院、社會科學院、創意藝術學院等等不同的知識範疇，所以課程內容特別豐富。另外一個值得留意的現象，是

將通識教育從課堂延展至日常生活，例如在學校一處唐式建築風格的院落一角設立「角落習齋」，供師生平時開展人文話題的對話和討論，以及定期舉辦通識教育活動，強化了校園的學習和文化氛圍。

以上三篇專題文章除投射了一個共同的議題，即在強調專業和技術的今天，人文教育可以如何展開以及其期許之外，也都提到了師生共同討論對於經典學習的重要性。無論是推行經典閱讀教育已久的St. John's College，還是近年開始嘗試通識教育核心課程的SUTD，以及重新打造通識教育的東海大學，都一致採取了小班討論制，鼓勵學生活躍思考、勇敢提問。

良好的課程是通識教育成功的必要條件，但還需配合優質的教學活動。在本期「通識教與學」欄目中，分別收錄了香港前天文台台長、香港中文大學客座教授林超英、香港中文大學哲學系教授吳啟超、St. John's College教師Martha Franks及浙江大學中國語言文學系教授胡可先四位學者分享的教育經驗。林超英所授的課程為「氣候・能量・生命」，這是一門將地球環境、資源與人類社會活動相整合的課程，當中既有值得深思的反省式問題，例如「個人在城市裏有否絕對自由」？又有關於道德在人類進化過程中所扮演的角色這類探究性的思考。

吳啟超以他所開設的兩門課程「中國文化要義」和「自由與命運」為例，探討了通識教育當中的一個核心問題——價值教育的可能性與實踐。作者首先肯定了價值的多元，繼而比較技術教育與價值教育兩者的分別，認為正是價值背後的多元化導致價值教育的困難之處。作者從不同文化取向來闡釋「命運」這一課題，提出通過「對他者的質詢和自我反思」，並參考不同的文化，以幫助學生自己建立較為成熟的價值觀。最後，作者認為即使處理價值問題十分棘手，也不可採取「省力」的態度，一味將其擱置，這種擱置只是一種「空

洞的包容」，因為「今天我們似乎已找不到最正確的價值觀，但透過對話、切磋、反思，我們可以得到更穩妥、更能說服自己的價值信念」。

Martha Franks講述了在北京大學附屬中學教授法律課程的親身經驗和教學感受。她以與中國文化全然不同的「局外人」身份，細緻地描述了自己在這所北京優秀中學教學的所見所聞，其中不乏自身的疑惑和反思。作者盡力將平時所感與課程內容聯繫在一起，她授課的內容，例如美國憲法、三權分立、土地法，在不同於西方價值體系的土壤中與學生固有的觀念產生了神奇的碰撞，這種嘗試無論對於作者本身，還是校方，都需要一定的魄力。當然，需要注意的是，作者參與的「國際班」課程對象並非全體學生，課程內容也與全國統一高考無關，而是為十幾名準備參加出國留學考試的學生而開設。

浙江大學中文系教授胡可先為讀者創造了一個色彩繽紛的唐詩世界。他開設的「唐詩經典研讀」期望人們能夠在古典文學作品中暫時遠離喧囂，重新發現內心深處寧靜的價值依託，這也正如作者引述自己學生的學習感受——學習唐詩是在追尋一種「道」，它可以與人民普遍一味追求實用主義的「器」相抗衡。文中所提到的唐詩欣賞方法既豐富又極具藝術感，例如基礎層面上可從聲律、節奏、體裁等方面鑒賞唐詩，深度層面上則可以反覆思量字法、句法，最後，借助其他領域的資料來源，如文物、繪畫、其他文獻等等，創建一種立體而豐富的唐詩閱讀方法。

本期《大學通識》最後一個欄目是對上期專題的回應。在上期的幾篇專題文章中，來自世界各地的學者闡述了對通識教育課程管理的看法。有的學者認為整個團隊的良好溝通與參與十分重要，有的學者認為課程領導是優質管理的保證。針對這些觀點，華南師範大學公共管理學院教授劉益宇、范冬萍由對香港中文大學通識教育課程的觀察

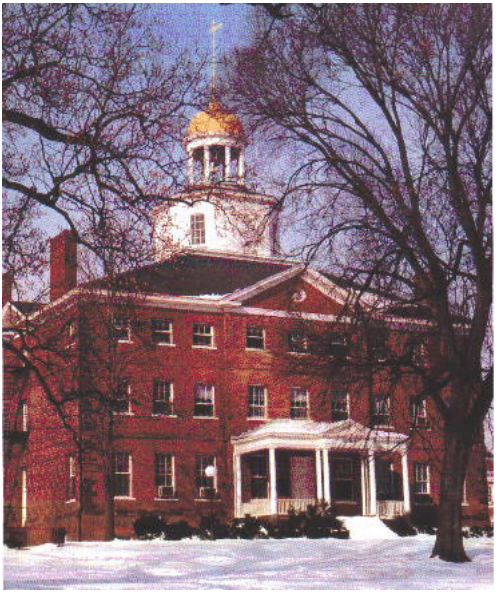
與研究出發，從系統管理理論的角度，分析了中大通識教育課程取得一些成功經驗的原因，文章最後對內地通識教育課程的管理與行政提出了建議和思考。

我們希望借助本期對閱讀經典、通識教學及通識課程設計理念的討論，去反思在繁雜的世界中，人如何更好地與世界、社會和自身相處，而不是在資訊汪洋中隨波逐流。

St. John's College: American Liberal Arts Education Redefined

Grant Franks *

St. John's College in Sante Fe, New Mexico, USA



McDowell Hall, the central academic building of St. John's College, Annapolis, MD

St. John's College occupies a special position among American colleges and universities. Since 1937, the College's curriculum—a unified liberal arts program that offers virtually no electives and that focuses on classic texts

* Tutor, St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

in literature, philosophy, science and mathematics—has challenged some of the fundamental ideas of American higher education. Despite being now well-established, faculty and students at St. John's still occasionally refer the curriculum as "the New Program," but the titles "the St. John's Program" or simply "the Program" are more common. St. John's College is often called the "Great Books School," a label that is accurate as far as it goes but is incomplete. It identifies one aspect of the Program—the texts that make up the content of study—while bypassing other features that are equally important, such as the unity of the curriculum, the lack of specialization of the faculty, and the inclusion of science and mathematics as part of the liberal arts.

St. John's College is not an experimental school. Although some refer to any small, unusual curriculum as "experimental," the St. John's Program has been in operation for over seventy years and the College is broadly satisfied that the present form of the Program accomplishes what it sets out to do, *viz*., to introduce students to the liberal arts through active reading and discussion of great texts. St. John's College is not really an *experiment* but a *protest* against the fragmentation of undergraduate education, as well as an *essay* in showing an alternative form of teaching that introduces students to existing traditions while maintaining freedom of thought and inquiry. As explained more fully below, although the St. John's Program requires the students to read an extensive list of required texts, they are not asked to adopt the ideas put forward by any of the authors. That would hardly be possible since many of the Program authors disagree with one another. Rather, the College hopes that students will become alive to fundamental issues and questions that have shaped, and continue to shape, the world in which they live.

The St. John's Program grew from reformist theories about American higher education and can best be understood in light of the intellectual

currents that shaped its creation. Like any concrete institution, St. John's College has its own history that determines how it came about in the particular time and place where it arose. St. John's College's institutional history goes back to the 17th century in Colonial Maryland. However, the education practices of the College are grounded in ongoing, timeless debates about the best form of human education. The ideas that shape the College are not exclusively American or even Western. In recent years, Professor Gan Yang has created Boya College at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, a school that shares some of the basic principles of St. John's College, and is expanding this development of liberal arts teaching to other Chinese universities. Boya College and St. John's College (Santa Fe) have entered upon an agreement providing for exchange of students and faculty in coming years and both institutions look forward to cooperation in development of liberal arts education in China.

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St. John's College—Institutional History

St. John's College can trace its roots to the founding of King Williams School in Annapolis, Maryland in 1693.[1] Originally a secondary preparatory school, the school was merged into the newly-chartered "St. John's College" (abandoning the name of the English monarch who was no longer popular

1 It is on the basis of this date that St. John's College stakes its tenuous and ultimately unimportant claim to be the third oldest college in America, after Harvard College (1636) and the College of William and Mary (1693). The nature of the school changed so radically with the arrival of the New Program in 1937 that this claim to historical primacy means very little except to romantically inclined alumni associations.

after the American Revolution) and became a degree-granting college in 1784. Despite its name, St. John's was never a religious college: from its foundation the school admitted qualified students "without requiring or enforcing any religious or civil test." The school was originally supported by the State of Maryland, but became private in 1805. It closed briefly during the American Civil War when students were drawn away to military duty. During the War, the College's facilities were turned to use first as a barracks and later a prison camp and military hospital.

The College reopened in 1866 and gradually recovered its fortunes. For a while beginning in 1884, the College operated as a military school; that phase of the College's history ended in 1923.

The stock market crash of 1929 and the following depression severely threatened St. John's College's financial stability. By 1936, St. John's was on the edge of collapse. Rather than closing, however, the school's Board of Visitors and Governors decided to attempt a complete reformation of the school's curriculum and to begin the school's history anew.

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Origins of the New Program: C. W. Eliot, Harvard and the Elective System

The New Program at St. John's College arose from the work of scholars in the early 20th century seeking to rescue undergraduate liberal arts education from the chaos into which it had fallen. The Program was in large part a response and critique of the educational reforms begun while

Charles William Eliot was President of Harvard University (1869–1909), especially the Elective System.

American undergraduate education in the 19th century was torn by conflicting pressures, from its traditional past on the one hand and from the growing need for scientific and technical training on the other hand. In the early years of the American republic, liberal arts colleges had existed principally to train clergymen. The curriculum of these colleges consisted largely of Greek, Latin, sometimes Hebrew and a modest amount of mathematics. With the advent of industrial technology, scientific schools were founded as adjuncts to these liberal arts undergraduate colleges.[2] In addition, state governments founded schools aimed at practical and vocational education. By the mid-1800s, traditional liberal arts colleges existed side-by-side with scientific and vocational schools. In the view of Harvard President C. W. Eliot, neither offered an ideal education for American leaders. Traditional colleges provided a classical training that was parochial and had no practical value, while scientific and technical schools furnished training that was narrow, technical and stultifying.

Eliot's answer was twofold—specialization of the faculty and the Elective System for undergraduates. He joined forces with those who were already working to turn Harvard away from its attachment to the Congregationalist church and the mission of training preachers and to develop instead a top-rank faculty devoted to academic research on the model of European universities. This expanded and specialized faculty provided

2 For example, the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard (1847); the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale (1847); the Chandler School of Science and Arts associated with Dartmouth College (1852).

a cafeteria of class offerings among which undergraduates were free to choose at they saw fit. The move toward specialization, or "the division of mental labor" as Eliot (1869) called it, was effective in increasing the academic reputation of the Harvard faculty. Other schools soon followed Harvard's lead.

It was less clear that the Elective System provided a coherent education for undergraduates. Many schools adopted some version of Harvard's Elective System for undergraduate education because it was—and still is—the natural counterpart to an academic faculty divided into separate specialized departments, but they were troubled by the lack of general supervision of undergraduate education as a whole. Concerns were expressed from the outset. Were 18-year-old students really able to compile a proper educational path for themselves from the varied and scattered offerings of university departments?[3] Critics argued that allowing students complete freedom to choose their classes would lead to a narrow and eccentrically specialized experience.[4] These concerns have persisted. Various compromises have been tried in an attempt to limit the fragmentation of undergraduate education inherent in the Elective System. Some schools require certain "core" courses of all students; some posit "distribution requirements" that direct students to take some classes in a scattered variety of fields. Student

3 Eliot himself explicitly argued that they were in an 1895 speech entitled "The Elective System." "Is it possible that the accumulated wisdom of the race cannot prescribe with certainty the studies which will best develop the human mind in general between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two? At first it certainly seems strange that we have to answer 'no' [.]" Many remained dubious.

4 A detailed description of the debate between the "liberal-free" (elective) concept of education and the *artes liberales* ideal that proposes a prescribed content for undergraduate education, see Kimball (1986), especially chap. 6. A brief review of the debate is available in Denham (2002).

choice is frequently limited to selection among pre-defined "majors" that each have their own required classes.

In the early 20th century many were dissatisfied with the chaotic and unsatisfactory state of American undergraduate education. In response to these problems, a handful of reformers including two Rhodes scholars, Stringfellow Barr (1897–1982) and Scott Buchanan (1895–1968), designed more radical responses that would ultimately lead to creation of the New Program at St. John's College.

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Buchanan, Barr and the Creation of the New Program

Scott Buchanan began thinking of the educational reforms that would lead to the New Program when he was an undergraduate at Amherst College. There he was a student of Alexander Meiklejohn, then president of Amherst, who "discouraged lecturing and encouraged teaching and learning by discussion" (Smith, 1983, p. 7). From Meiklejohn, Buchanan gained an excitement for Socratic questioning. "[I]t was through Alec Meiklejohn that the whole living Socratic method became clear. There was a time when the whole college seemed to be Socratic" (*Embers of the World*, 1969). While at Amherst, Buchanan also encountered John Erskine of Columbia University, who had for some years been "working out a number of ideas about the presentation of great authors and their works to young people, normally and properly occupied with contemporary life" (Erskine, 1948, p. 165).

Buchanan's ideas for education from Great Books developed further in his early teaching experience. After a Rhodes scholarship at Oxford,

Buchanan obtained a Ph.D. in philosophy at Harvard and taught for a year at the College of the City of New York. In 1925, he became assistant director of the People's Institute of the Cooper Union in New York, where he organized lectures aimed at interested individuals not working toward a formal academic degree. Here Buchanan experienced how discussion about classic texts such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* could generate intellectual excitement outside of ordinary academic circles.

While Buchanan was working at the People's Institute, other schools were trying "Great Books seminars" as a means to counteract the fragmentation and incoherence of undergraduate curricula. At Columbia University, Erskine was implementing a core curriculum based on the reading of a list of great works. At the University of Chicago, university president Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer Adler were advancing similar ideas (Denham, 2002).

Buchanan continued to develop ideas for undergraduate education at the University of Virginia, where he joined the philosophy faculty in 1929. There he re-joined Stringfellow Barr, a colleague whom he knew from time shared at Oxford University. While at Virginia, Buchanan studied mathematics and logic and became convinced that a proper liberal arts education could not omit these subjects. Buchanan and Barr worked together to design a two-year long "honors program" for gifted students that would consist of "study and practice of the liberal arts through the reading and discussion of great books" (Smith, 1983, p. 17). The plan was never implemented—it was far too ambitious to be carried out in the time allowed—but it ultimately became a template for the four-year curriculum of St. John's College.

By 1937, Buchanan was anxious to try something new. It was clear that his honors curriculum would not be adopted at Virginia. Tentative plans to

try the curriculum at the University of Chicago fell through. Then, by chance, Buchanan met members of the Board of Visitors and Governors of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland and learned of the school's situation. The College being in desperate straits, its Board was willing to give Barr and Buchanan extraordinary freedom to implement their ideas at St. John's.

The New Program of St. John's College was born.

St. John's College, Santa Fe NM

Overcoming some early difficult years, enthusiasm for the New Program attracted students and gradually restored stability to the school. By the early 1960s, thanks to a growing student body and a gift of land from actress Greer Garson, a second campus was built in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Since 1964, St. John's has carried out an identical Program of instruction in two locations, one in the Maryland tidewater beside the Chesapeake Bay and the other in the Sangre de Cristo mountains of the American south-western desert, separated by over two thousand miles.

In 1967, the College began to offer a master's degree program in liberal arts, first in Santa Fe and later in Annapolis as well. In 1994, a new program in Eastern Classics was instituted on the Santa Fe campus.

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Principles of the St. John's Program

There are five principles that characterize the St. John's Program. They have been present in the curriculum since the New Program was instituted in 1937 and still guide the College. In brief, they are:

- *Great Books*
- *Discussion Classes*
- *Unity of the Curriculum*
- *Non-Specialization of the Faculty*
- *Inclusion of Math and Science among the Liberal Arts*

Great Books. Instruction at St. John's College takes place principally by the reading and discussion of Great Books.

The exact definition of "Great Books" is, unsurprisingly, the subject of some controversy. To begin with, a *limited*, *negative* criterion of what constitutes a Great Book is that it is *not a textbook*. That is, a Great Book is not one written by a teacher expressly for students. Textbooks are generally written with an unavoidable and even appropriate attitude of

condescension: The author knows a subject, the reader does not know it, and the book aims to convey well-digested information to the reader. Such books, once mastered, are generally set aside and rarely re-read.

Great Books, by contrast, are not tidy summaries of well-understood facts. They are often works of exploration and discovery, conveying new ideas and new ways of understanding. They are not aimed at students but at a general audience or sometimes at professional colleagues. Unlike textbooks, Great Books are usually read more than once—even again and again. It is characteristic of a Great Book that it repays each re-reading with new insights and understanding.

Whenever possible, St. John's assigns complete works to be studied. Ideally, a Great Book should speak for itself. If a Great Book is severely edited, or if portions from it are extracted and included in an anthology or offered as a supplement to a modern text, the student may find that he or she is studying the editor's or anthologizer's ideas rather than those of the Great Book author, whose text has been cut apart and made to function like tiles in a mosaic constructed by the editor.

A Great Book is one to which generations of readers have returned and found an inexhaustible source for reflection and inspiration. In the Western tradition, the dialogues of Plato—about which Alfred North Whitehead (1978, p. 39) famously remarked that all of Western Philosophy is merely a "series of footnotes"—exemplify this sort of text. Similarly, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* furnished continuing inspiration to ancient Greek and Roman civilizations and continue to move modern readers. The plays of William Shakespeare continue to challenge, enlighten and entertain audiences and

scholars over four hundred years after their original performances. The Bible, understood not as a divine text to which a worshiper's life is abjectly submitted, but as a text that successive generations have revisited for new insights and inspiration, is another ideal example of a Great Book that repays repeated re-reading.

Although the New Program at St. John's originally focused exclusively on Great Books of the Western tradition, that position has changed in the last two decades. Various arguments were offered to justify Western parochialism. Some claimed that students should learn their own traditions before examining others. Others worried that faculty lacked linguistic competence to read non-Western books or even that discussion in the St. John's manner might not be appropriate to Oriental texts which might require instead commitment to "living discipline" (Brann, 1979, p. 66). In 1994, however, the College established a post-graduate program of study in Eastern Classics on its Santa Fe campus. Since then, students in this program have read and discussed classic texts from India, China and Japan in the fashion of St. John's seminars.[5] They have studied Sanskrit and Chinese and the faculty has developed the linguistic competence whose absence had previously justified omitting these books. The undergraduate Program still focuses exclusively on Western texts largely because there is not enough time available to include more readings without losing the coherence and inter-textual conversation that the present sequence of readings allows.

With these examples in mind, an attempt might be made at a definition

5 A summary of the Eastern Classics reading list is attached as Appendix I to this article.

of a "Great Book." The original statement of the St. John's Program offered five criteria:

- **"[A] great book is one that has been read by the largest number of persons . . . ."**
- **"[A] great book has the largest number of possible interpretations.** This . . . refers to the inexhaustibility of its significance."
- **"[A] great book should raise the persistent unanswerable questions about . . . great themes . . . ."**
- **"[A] great book must be a work of fine art;** it must have an immediate intelligibility and style which will excite and discipline the ordinary mind by its form alone."
- **"[A] great book must be a masterpiece of the liberal arts.** Its author must be a master of the arts of thought and imagination whose work has been faithful to the ends of these arts, the understanding and exposition of the truth."

Speaking from personal experience, I can testify that the books of the St. John's Program merit continual re-reading. After more than twenty-five years of experience with the texts of the St. John's College, the works continue to be fresh with each reading and to bring out interesting and exciting insights in each seminar conversation. Nor are Great Books limited to particular cultural settings. My wife Martha and I spent the academic years 2012–2014 teaching at the Dalton Academy in Beijing (北大附中). Among other things, during that time we led St. John's style discussion classes for

Chinese high school students reading and discussing Shakespeare's *Hamlet* for an entire semester. Martha led another such discussion class on Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. In each case, we found that after a brief period of accommodation, our Chinese students responded with the same enthusiasm and interest to conversations arising from these texts as had our American students at St. John's College. Conversely, experience in Santa Fe with the Eastern Classics program has confirmed that Great Books from other traditions, ranging from the *Bhagavad Gita* (भगवद्गीता) to the works of Confucius (孔子) and Mencius (孟子) and the Japanese *Tale of Genji* (源氏物語) engage Western students, reward repeated readings and lead to productive discussion.

Any effort to make a list of Great Books is, of course, subject to criticism of various sorts. No list of Great Books is exhaustive. J. Winfree Smith, a faculty member at the College in the early years of the New Program, was careful to emphasize in his history of St. John's Program that the curriculum is "based on the reading of 'great books,' not '*the* great books,' since they do not constitute a fixed canon" (Smith, 1983, p. 1). The list that St. John's used in the first year of the New Program was based on that devised by Buchanan for the never-instituted Virginia Plan. That list, in turn, was based on other lists from earlier programs.[6] Objections can be made to any list. Some objections are local and limited, claiming that this or that book has been included (or excluded) while another has been excluded (included). These discussions

6 Buchanan gave credit to lists compiled by John Erskine in 1920 at Columbia and another by Sir John Lubbock prepared for the Workers and Mechanics Institute in England, published in 1895 (Smith, 1983, p. 10).

are frequent at St. John's, especially about newer texts.[7] A summary of the current undergraduate reading list is given as an Appendix II to this article.[8]

Other critics of the St. John's Program argue that lists of Great Books such at that used by the College focus too much on the views of privileged persons, often characterized as "dead white males," and systematically exclude the views of disadvantaged social groups. To some extent such concerns are addressed by increased sensitivity to works of women and minorities, especially among recent works.[9] Older texts, however, necessarily reflect in some degree the social structures of their times: literature in ancient societies was almost exclusively the work of dominant social groups, i.e., in the West that meant well-to-do free males.[10] Some Program writers express

7 The older the text, the more likely that agreement can be reached about its significance even by those who disagree with its content. Even those who reject Plato's idealism agree that *The Republic* is an essential text for Western thought because it defined the terms of philosophical discussion for centuries. Similarly, it is important that students read and reflect upon the significance of the Bible regardless of their attitudes toward religion because so much of the literary, social and philosophical works of the Western world have been shaped by Biblical ideas. What is or is not important in the writings of the last hundred years is harder to discern. For this reason, few works of the last century are assigned. Only four works on the current undergraduate reading list were published after 1915 (Freud, *Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis* [1917], Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* [1925], Heidegger's *Being and Time* [1927] and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* [1953]). In any event, placing a book on the reading list is not equivalent to endorsing its contents, but only acknowledges the value of discussing it. Some faculty members take comfort in the reflection that any work that supports serious conversation provides a valuable educational experience.

8 For a comparison of how the St. John's reading list has changed in the years since the institution of the New Program, see Rule (2009).

9 Admittedly, all the authors on the St. John's reading list are dead. Some were not men (e.g., Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf). None of the authors on the Eastern Classics reading list are "white," and the undergraduate reading list includes a few nonwhite writers (W. E. B. DuBois, Frederick Douglass). However, it remains true that the majority of works on the St. John's reading list were written by persons in privileged social situations.

10 Not exclusively, of course. Epictetus was a slave. Socrates was not especially well-to-do (although Plato was).

views that are outside the pale of today's acceptable opinions: Aristotle, for instance, speaks in favor of natural slavery, and the letters of Paul in the New Testament contain passages that have been cited to support the oppression of homosexuals. Here we have to acknowledge that the Great Books that exist are, necessarily, the Great Books *of the past*. The culture in which we live, while a living offshoot of the past, is always becoming something new. One has to recognize finally that the roots of our present traditions do not in all cases resemble the leaves. For better or for worse, whatever views the majority now holds grew out of views that the majority now does *not* hold. Nonetheless, Aristotle can be read, studied, and even admired without accepting all his views. The books of the St. John's program do not all agree with one another, much less with current popular opinion, and students can study and profit from them without necessarily agreeing with them. A candid approach to the past is not a flaw in the Program but a strength.

Discussion Classes. Another principle of the College is that learning takes place from active participation in conversation, not from passive hearing of lectures followed by recital of the information heard. A longtime faculty member and former dean of the Annapolis campus expressed the importance of conversation to the College: "[f]rom the beginning our prevailing and pervasive mode has been conversation. Conversation is the public complement to that original dialogue of the soul with itself that is called thinking" (Brann, 1991).

Every classroom at St. John's, on both campuses, contains a large table surrounded by chairs, a setting for face to face discussion. Every class, whether a seminar on a literary, philosophical or historical work or a mathematics

tutorial, is an occasion for discussion of a shared text, or occasionally a shared experience. Every student is expected to contribute regularly to the discussion; not to do so risks poor grades and dismissal from the College.

A St. John's College classroom always contains a large table for discussion.

There are no lecture classes at St. John's. No classrooms have the rows of chairs facing a speaking station that are customary at most schools. The only lectures that regularly take place at the College occur on Friday evenings. These consist of public lectures that are open to the entire community and the interested public. Attendance is not taken. Topics range widely. Occasionally an attempt is made to coordinate the lecture with topics being discussed in one or another of the seminar classes, but more often the subject matter has no explicit connection to what is occurring in seminars or any other classes. In keeping with the idea that learning should be active, the lectures are always followed by a lengthy question period, often much longer than the lecture itself, in which students and faculty members probe the lecturer. They are called "question periods" and not "question *and*

answer" periods because it is not assumed that the lecturer will simply provide answers. A question period is deemed a special success if it provokes a seminar-style conversation involving give-and-take between and among the lecturer and the audience.

The College's almost exclusive reliance on active student discussion aims to enliven the student's connection with the texts being read. It is consistent with the experience of Buchanan at the People's Institute in New York where he found that lively participation in conversation was a reliable indicator of active learning. The value of this insight has been borne out by years of practice at the College in Maryland and New Mexico. In my own experience, it was borne out again in the classes that my wife and I led at the Dalton Academy in Beijing. To be sure, many students in those classes felt a strong inhibition preventing them from speaking actively in class. Whether that reluctance sprang from linguistic anxiety about speaking in a foreign language, from prior habituation to passive educational practice or from some characteristically Chinese reluctance openly to express disagreement in order not to disturb "harmony"—all theories that we contemplated from time to time in our stay—by the end of a few months many students were comfortably and eagerly discussing readings that we placed before them. In my 10th grade (高一) humanities class, I relied heavily on the reading of Platonic dialogs to impress upon students the message that a memorable and valuable class session might consist only of unanswered questions, and end with no final resolution, only a spur to further and deeper thought. Students resisted at first, but finally learned to tolerate and even like Socrates, whom one student referred to as "Mr. Question."

Unity of the Curriculum. One of the most striking features of the St. John's Program is the near total lack of electives. The curriculum is fixed; the student faces no decisions about majors, minors or classes to be taken. The St. John's Program is the antithesis of the Elective System.

The chief virtue of the unified curriculum is that it allows the College to form a single community of learning. For the students, that means that any student can go to any other student of his or her class or in higher classes for assistance with any classwork. So, for example, all Sophomores study the mathematician Apollonius of Perga simultaneously. All Juniors begin their reading of Kant's C*ritique of Pure Reason* at the same time. Because all students share work on the Program, conversation in the dining hall or the coffee shop is as likely to be concerned with aspects of the Program as with pop culture, which is the only shared experience for students in other schools.

Unity of the Curriculum also means that the subject matter of any class can be referred to and discussed in any other class. Topics of human inquiry are not arbitrarily divided into class subjects. At St. John's, any class may be related to any other class. So, Aristotle's idea of *entelecheia* (actuality) may come up naturally in a biology laboratory; it can equally arise in a math class. Pascal may show up in discussions of Faulkner; Ptolemy may be referenced in order to sort out ideas of quantum mechanics, and so on. Thought can range freely over all topics and make connections wherever they seem appropriate. The boundaries of electives and specialties do not constrain discussion.

Non-Specialization of the Faculty. An immediate consequence of the Unity of the Curriculum is that the faculty cannot be specialized.

If a student might refer to rules of 17th century counterpoint in mathematics class—as happened recently in my experience, the teacher must be willing and able to accommodate and respond to the connection. Ideally therefore all members of the faculty teach *all* classes in the curriculum. This necessarily means that, in many cases, a faculty member will be leading a class outside his or her area of special study. It is for this reason that faculty members are called "tutors," not "professors." The faculty is expected to lead the students in inquiry about the subject matter of the class, not to provide detailed expert knowledge. Thus they do not "profess" a subject and are not "professors." When new faculty arrive at the College they often begin teaching Freshman classes in which, regardless of their educational background, they are learning alongside the students. They are encouraged to expand their work in the Program until they have gained experience in all classes.

Just as any student can go to any other student for assistance, any faculty member doing any class can seek assistance from any other colleague who is doing or has done that class. Also, such collegiality is not inhibited by professional pride: every tutor knows the experience of working outside the area of his or her expertise. It often happens that a mathematics tutorial is led by someone whose graduate work was in literature or political science. In such circumstances, tutors learn to take advantage of colleagues who have already worked on the same material. Seeking and giving collegial assistance is routine at the College.

There is no interdepartmental competition because there are no departments. All tutors hold the same position and have the same interest in

teaching the Program. The centrifugal dynamic that makes general education the orphan in other institutions where faculty members are motivated to advance in their special fields does not occur at St. John's College.

Science and Math Are Liberal Arts. Mathematics and science are integral parts of the curriculum at St. John's College and are approached in the same way as other subjects, by reading and discussing classic texts. For some, this is the most surprising feature of the St. John's Program. "Liberal arts" are often thought of as standing in opposition to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. At St. John's, however, the liberal arts have always been understood to include both the subjects encompassed by the medieval "triviuum" (Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic) and the "quadriviuum" (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy). In modern terms, St. John's believes that the "liberal arts" include everything that engages the reflective mind. Liberal arts must therefore necessarily encompass mathematics and science. Indeed, since the scientific revolution of the 17th century, the issues raised by the conflict between humanist and scientific visions of the world, whether those conflicts are real or only apparent, are central to a complete education. Those questions cannot be approached responsibly without both an understanding of the scientific enterprise and grounding in humanistic thought.

St. John's College approaches mathematics and science through classic texts. This, too, surprises some critics of the Program who believe that, that while classic texts of literature or philosophy may still be valuable, mathematics and science are cumulative projects in which new

discoveries simply replace old ideas which then have no further value.[11] Such objections misunderstand the purpose of studying mathematics and science as liberal arts. The mathematics tutorial of the College seeks to provide occasions for students to reflect on the nature of mathematical thinking as a human activity, not to place them at the forefront of modern mathematical research. Students who eventually go into graduate research in mathematics must of course ultimately get up-to-date in the field of their specialty, but that is the task of graduate school, not undergraduate education. Undergraduate education, as a first step toward creative and original work later, should provide students with a grasp of the nature of the logical rigor that is essential to mathematics, and that is the focus of the St. John's approach.

For this purpose, classic texts are preferable. Euclid's *Elements*, the 3rd-century B.C. treatise of Greek mathematics that served as an authoritative exposition of elementary geometry and number theory for over two thousand years, is unsurpassed as an introduction to mathematical reasoning. Its accessibility and clarity stand as models of logical thought. The spectre of Euclid's *Elements* looms over other subjects in the St. John's curriculum as if tacitly demanding why ethics, politics and aesthetics cannot be expressed with the same compelling rigor that characterizes geometry. Even the flaws in Euclid's book are valuable. When in the Senior Year students read Lobachevsky's *Theory of Parallels* (1830), which explores alternatives

11 American philosopher Sidney Hook, in a 1944 article about St. John's, articulates this objection to approaching mathematics and science through classic texts: "The historical classics in mathematics and science are often written in an outmoded notation. Works of genius as they are, they are also full of false starts, irrelevant bypaths, and blind alleys. The science of our day has already extracted the rich ore and put it in a form which facilitates more rapid comprehension and further progress" (Sidney, 1946).

to Euclid's fundamental postulates, or David Hilbert's *Foundations of Geometry* (1900), which exposes logical gaps in the earliest propositions of Euclid's work, they are driven powerfully to question how logical arguments that seemed so compelling could be flawed or incomplete. They are led to wonder at the nature of logic itself.

Perhaps the text that most vividly illustrates the St. John's approach to mathematics and science is Ptolemy's *Almagest*, the presentation of geocentric astronomy composed in 2nd-century A.D. Alexandria. Ptolemy's work is a brilliant and compelling application of geometrical science to the phenomena of nature, *viz.*, the motions of the stars and planets. It is made all the more interesting because students know that his entire approach to the subject was overthrown and replaced in the 16th and 17th centuries by the work of Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, who are studied in the Sophomore and Junior years. Yet Ptolemy's geometry is correct and his work serves as an ever-present touchstone for reflecting on how mathematics can structure our understanding of nature. The *Almagest* routinely returns in conversations as students later study Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity and Quantum Theory in their Senior Year.

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Practices of the College

The Undergraduate Program. Carrying out the principles described above, the College has crafted an undergraduate curriculum consisting of four classes each semester. With very minor exceptions, all undergraduate

students in the same level (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior) take the same classes. These classes consist of the following:

Seminar. The Seminar is the central class of the Program. It extends through all four years and meets twice a week, on Monday and Thursday evenings, for two hours. Classes consist of two faculty members and about seventeen to twenty students. For each session, the students will have read in advance a prescribed text listed on the Seminar Reading list.[12] The sessions begin with an opening question posed by one of the faculty. Conversation then continues in whatever direction the class deems important. The tutors participate along with the students, occasionally intervening to keep the discussion focused on the text or to highlight or revive questions or issues that seem especially valuable. Seminars are scheduled for two hours, but often last longer if the conversation becomes animated.

Freshmen begin by reading Homer's *Iliad*, divided over four seminar sessions. Readings continue more-or-less chronologically through four years, ending with readings in 20th century literature and philosophy in the Senior Year.

For eight weeks in the Junior and Senior years, seminars are suspended and replaced by "**preceptorials**." These are seminar-like classes led by a single tutor in which usually a single text is examined more slowly than the seminar format permits. Preceptorial selections are the only "electives" that undergraduate students choose.

12 A summary of the reading list of the College can be found as Appendix II to this article.

Tutorials. Other classes, called "tutorials," occur during weekdays and are of three kinds: Language, Mathematics and Laboratory. During the Sophomore year, the Laboratory tutorial is replaced by a Music tutorial. Tutorials meet three times a week and consist of a single tutor and between twelve and sixteen students.

In the **Language** tutorial, students work on close reading of texts with special reference to means of expression. In the Freshman year, all students learn the elements of ancient Greek and spend time translating texts that are also read in Seminar. Study of Greek provides perspective on grammar, which many students grasp more readily in a foreign language than in their native tongue. It also allows students to reflect on the decisions made by the translators of texts which they read in their Seminars. The study of Greek continues in the first semester of the Sophomore year, culminating with slow reading of a major work of literature such as Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* in its original language. The second semester of the Sophomore year is devoted to English literature, including reading of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in its original Middle English and the careful, prolonged study of a play by Shakespeare.

In the Junior year, students acquire a reading knowledge of French and study works of French literature culminating in a reading of Racine's *Phèdre*. The study of French continues in the first semester of Senior year; in the last semester, attention turns usually to modern English language poetry and short stories.

The **Mathematics** tutorial begins with a reading of Euclid's *Elements*, which takes all of the first semester and part of the second. Afterwards,

attention turns to Ptolemy's *Almagest*, a project that generally extends into the first semester of the Sophomore year where it is followed by a reading of works by Copernicus and Kepler, detailing the replacement of the geocentric by heliocentric world-views. The most extended project of Sophomore mathematics is the *Conics* of Apollonius of Perga, a brilliant integration of three dimensional geometry and ratio theory which is not only interesting in its own right but essential for later readings. The Sophomore year concludes with Descartes' *Géometrie*, the text that married algebra and geometry to produce modern analytic geometry.

Much of the Junior year is given to the study of calculus based on a reading of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, a difficult but essential work in which infinitesimal methods are expressed geometrically in order to allow astronomy to be understood as a branch of elementary mechanics. The overwhelming triumph of Newton's mathematical physics in explaining everything from the motions of comets to the tides set the stage for the 18th century's celebration of human reason and essentially created physics in the form still taught in schools. In the Senior year, the mathematics tutorial studies Einstein's theories of relativity, beginning with his 1905 paper *On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies* in the first semester; in the second semester, the tutorial turns to non-Euclidean geometry and to Gödel's theory of the incompleteness of formal logical systems.

More students probably come to St. John's *despite* rather than *because* of the required four-year mathematics program; however, many students who were apprehensive of the mathematics program learn to love it. When studied as the exemplar of reason in its clearest form—rather than as a set of tools to be acquired quickly and with as little understanding as possible—

mathematics reveals itself as an exploration of beauty displayed in rigor and abstract symmetry.

The **Laboratory** in the Freshman year is devoted to observational biology in the first semester of the Freshman year and to chemistry in the second semester, examining Antoine Lavoisier's classic treatise *Elements of Chemistry* and culminating in Mendeleev's development of the periodic table of the elements. In the Junior year, the first semester examines elementary mechanics as developed by Newton, Leibniz, Huygens and elementary thermodynamics through works of Sadi Carnot and J. C. Maxwell. The second semester turns to electromagnetism chiefly through works of Michael Faraday and J. C. Maxwell, culminating in the Maxwell equations and the demonstration that electromagnetic radiation has the speed and characteristics of light. In the Senior year, students study early quantum theory in the first semester and genetics in the second semester.

In the Sophomore year, the Laboratory is replaced by a **Music** tutorial. Students learn fundamentals of music theory in order to study works by J. S. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Wagner, among others.

Evaluation. Typically there are no examinations at St. John's. Students are evaluated in each class according to their participation in class discussion and papers submitted. Each semester, students meet with all their tutors in a "Don Rag," a fifteen to twenty minute session in which the tutors describe and discuss the student's performance in each of their classes and offer praise or admonishment as appropriate and suggestions for improvement. By means of the Don Rag, as well as other informal consultation, all of a student's tutors are aware of the student's work at the College as a whole.

During the student's Senior year, he or she writes an extended essay that is submitted to a committee of three tutors. If the essay is accepted, the student undergoes a formal, public hour-long examination on the paper. These examinations, open to the entire College community, are often the highlight of the second semester. Successful completion of this examination is often celebrated as the culmination of the student's work at the College with champagne on the College Library steps.

The Graduate Institute

In addition to the undergraduate curriculum, since 1967 the College has had a **Graduate Institute** (the "GI"). Originally intended primarily for continuing education of teachers, the GI allows students already holding a bachelor of arts degree from another school to participate in the St. John's Program. In order to allow flexibility for students not studying full-time, courses in the GI are arranged according to subject matter—Literature, Politics and Society, Philosophy and Theology, Mathematics and Natural Science, and History—and are studied in one-semester units that students can approach in any order they wish.

In 1994, the GI in Santa Fe began offering a GI Master of Arts program in Eastern Classics. A three semester seminar program follows a reading list of classic texts from India, China and Japan.[13] Along with the seminar, students take a sequence of "preceptorials" in which longer and more demanding texts are read more slowly than the seminar allows. Also, students are required to

13 A summary of the reading list of the Eastern Classics program can be found as an Appendix I to this article.

take tutorials in either Classical Chinese or Sanskrit.

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Reflections on the College

No living institution simply reflects the thoughts of a single person. Even an institution like St. John's College that has grown from specific and identifiable intellectual roots attracts people who come to it for distinctly different and varied reasons. Not all St. John's faculty members—and certainly not all students—profess a single ideal of education or understand the mission of the College identically. Even those who have very similar ideas might express them differently. The College has remained fundamentally faithful to its founding purpose: it is still a dissenting presence in the landscape of American education, proclaiming to any who would listen that there is an alternative to textbook-and-lecture-based, information-directed education. Nonetheless, the reasons that attract faculty and students to an existing institution may differ in some ways from the motives that led its founders to create it.

Some feel sympathetic to the St. John's Program for **epistemological** reasons. The Program takes a generally chronological approach to the material studied. They believe that we cannot really understand the ideas that we hold unless we re-awaken the historical process that led to them.

> The end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

(T. S. Eliot, *Little Gidding V*)

The German philosopher Edmund Husserl described the way in which once novel and interesting ideas become "sedimented" in language and common belief so that their original power and interest is lost (Husserl, 1970, p. 52). Reliving the immediacy of ancient thought effects a sort of "desedimentation" that revives the roots of experience that otherwise might remain unconscious and thus unavailable for understanding. This is one on-going reason that brings people to the St. John's Program.

Others are attracted to St. John's for its **conservatism**. The College takes seriously traditions and ideas that many believe are too often forgotten, overlooked or despised by the modern world. What is modern and up-to-date is not always right or good. For instance, some followers of the political scientist Leo Strauss find the College congenial because, in taking seriously the writings of ancient authors, it does not presume prematurely that more recent ideas are always better than those that they seem to have replaced. Strauss, who was a scholar-in-residence at St. John's College in Annapolis at the time of his death, believed that "Liberal education is education in culture or toward culture." Since the great teachers of culture are historically rare, Strauss said, modern students "[f]or all practical purposes . . . have access . . . to the greatest minds, only through the great books" (Strauss, 1967, p. 73). Strauss was an extraordinarily close reader of ancient texts and instilled in his students a respect for old texts that resides comfortably at St. John's.

It may seem paradoxical, therefore, that still others are attracted to the College for the **radical freedom** it permits its students. Although the

College prescribes in detail what books its students are to read, it makes no effort to dictate what they are to think about them.[14] I came to the College as an undergraduate in 1973. At the time, I was vaguely aware of the chaotic voices in the culture around me. All sorts of theories were on offer from different directions—some violently political, others religiously enthusiastic, still others scientifically confident—making conflicting claims and pressing urgent agendas. St. John's College did nothing of the sort. It offered no doctrine or dogma. The Great Books themselves do not speak with a single voice: books on the St. John's reading list support capitalism (Adam Smith) and communism (Karl Marx), religion (St. Paul) and atheism (Friedrich Nietzsche), expedience (Machiavelli) and principle (the Bible). The College's message was that *the students* would be trusted to read and evaluate these conflicting messages for themselves with no textbooks as guides and with tutors whose function is to ask questions and not to furnish answers. To place such trust in the students is a radical step, but the only way to help students learn to think for themselves, freely, is to offer them practice in doing so.

The deepest attraction of the College, however, is the **beauty** of the ideas studied there. None of the other motives—desedimentation, conservatism, radicalism and others that I have not mentioned or thought of—occupy the minds of the College's students and faculty on a daily basis. When engaged in the work of the Program, what is most evident is the inherent

14 This freedom applies even to scientific and mathematical texts. St. John's College probably has more students who have studied the calculus *but who do not believe in it* than any other institution in the world. Elsewhere most students either avoid studying calculus or learn it for its unquestioned utility. Relatively few schools require their students to study the subject but encourage them to reflect on the questionable maneuvers that its 17th century inventors employed to create it and whether later mathematicians have adequately repaired its doubtful foundations. See Berkeley (1734).

intellectual excitement evidenced in each work examined. The authors of the Great Books wrote these books, poems, and compositions because the ideas contained in them were compelling, and intrinsically beautiful. At St. John's, we read and discuss them for the same reason. Whether a student is demonstrating the infinitude of prime numbers (mathematics), contemplating Descartes' demonstration of the existence of God (philosophy), reflecting on Newton's discovery that gravity is the force that holds the Moon in its orbit (physics) or reading Prince Hamlet's soliloquies (literature), the work of the College furnishes constant reminders that intellectual reflection in all its forms provides opportunity for the experience of unparalleled beauty.

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Appendix I. Eastern Classics Reading List

The following is a summary of texts read in the Eastern Classics Seminar. Students also read Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shi Ji* 史記, *Tale of Genji* and selections from the *Mahabharata* in required preceptorials. A more detailed list of readings is available at http://www.sjc.edu/academics/graduate/master-s-eastern-classics/

- Confucius (Kongzi 孔子), *Analects*
- Mozi 墨子, *Writings*
- Mencius (Mengzi 孟子), *Writings*
- Xunzi 荀子, *Writings*
- Zhuangzi 莊子, *Writings*
- Laozi 老子, *Dao de Jing* 道德經
- Han Feizi 韓非子, *Writings*
- *The Rig Veda*, *selections*
- *The Upanishads—Katha Upanishad, Kena Upanishad, Mundaka Upanishad Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*
- *Nyaya Sutra*
- *Vaisesika Sutra*
- *Padarthadharmasamgraha*
- *Tattva-Kaumudi*
- Patanjali, *Yoga Sutra*
- *The Bhagavad Gita*
- Kalidasa, *Kumarasambhava*, *Shakuntala*

- Anandavardhana, *Dhvanyaloka*
- *Purva Mimansa*
- Charvaka, *Writings*
- Buddhist Pali Sutras
- *Lotus Sutra*
- Nagarjuna, *Mulamadhamakarika*
- *Vimalakirti Sutra*
- Gaudapada, *The Great Karika on the Mandukya Upanishad*
- Shankaracharya, Commentary on the *Vedanta Sutras*
- Ramanujan, *Commentary on the Vedanta Sutras*
- Jayadeva, *Gita Govinda*
- *Diamond Sutra*
- Hui Neng 惠能, *Commentary on the Diamond Sutra, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*
- Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Writings*
- Wang Yangming 王陽明, *Inquiry of the Great Learning*
- *The Tale of the Heike*
- Kukai, *The Meanings of Sound, Word, and Reality*
- Sei Shonagon, *The Pillow Book*
- Kamo no Chomei, *Record of the Ten-Foot Square Hut*
- Dogen, "*Bendowa*," "*Bussho*," "*Genjokoan*," "*Uji*."
- Kenko, *Essays in Idleness*
- Basho, "*Journey of Bleached Bones in a Field*," "*Kashimo Journal*," "*Knapsack Notebook*," "*Sarashine Journal*," "*The Narrow Road to the Deep North*."

Appendix II. St. John's College Reading List

The following is a general summary of the readings of the St. John's Program in the year 2013–2014. The detailed seminar reading lists are available at the College's web-site, http: //www.sjc.edu/academics/undergraduate/seminar/

Freshman year

- Homer: *Iliad*, *Odyssey*
- Aeschylus: *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*, *The Eumenides*, *Prometheus Bound*
- Sophocles: *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*, *Philoctetes*, *Ajax*
- Thucydides: *Peloponnesian War*
- Euripides: *Hippolytus*, *The Bacchae*
- Herodotus: *Histories*
- Aristophanes: *Clouds*
- Plato: *Meno*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Parmenides*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, *Timaeus*, *Phaedrus*
- Aristotle: *Poetics*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *On Generation and Corruption*, *Politics*, *Parts of Animals*, *Generation of Animals*
- Euclid: *Elements*
- Plutarch: "*Lycurgus*" and "*Solon*" from the *Parallel Lives*
- Antoine Lavoisier: *Elements of Chemistry*
- William Harvey: *Motion of the Heart and Blood*

- Essays by: Archimedes, Gabriel Fahrenheit, Amedeo Avogadro, Joseph Black, John Dalton, Stanislao Cannizzaro, Rudolf Virchow, Edme Mariotte, Hans Adolf Eduard Driesch, Joseph Louis Gay-Lussac, Hans Spemann, Guy Beckley Stearns, J. J. Thomson, Dmitri Mendeleev, Claude Louis Berthollet, Joseph Proust

Sophomore year

- The Bible
- Aristotle: *De Anima*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior Analytics*, *Categories*
- Apollonius: *Conics*
- Virgil: *Aeneid*
- Plutarch: "*Caesar*," "C*ato the Younger*," "*Antony*," and "*Brutus*" from *the Parallel Lives*
- Epictetus: D*iscourses*, *Manual*
- Tacitus: *Annals*
- Ptolemy: *Almagest*
- Plotinus: *The Enneads*
- Lucretius: *On the Nature of Things*
- Augustine of Hippo: *Confessions*
- Maimonides: *Guide for the Perplexed*
- Anselm of Canterbury: *Proslogium*
- Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologica*
- Dante: *Divine Comedy*
- Geoffrey Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales*
- Niccolò Machiavelli: *The Prince*, *Discourses*
- Johannes Kepler: *Epitome IV*

- François Rabelais: *Gargantua and Pantagruel*
- Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: *Missa Papae Marcelli*
- Michel de Montaigne: *Essays*
- François Viète: *Introduction to the Analytical Art*
- Francis Bacon: *Novum Organum*
- William Shakespeare: *Richard II*, *Henry IV, Part 1*, *Henry IV, Part 2*, *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Sonnets*
- Poems by: Andrew Marvell, John Donne, and other 16th- and 17th-century poets
- René Descartes: *Geometry*, *Discourse on Method*
- Blaise Pascal: *Generation of Conic Sections*
- Johann Sebastian Bach: *St. Matthew Passion*, *Inventions*
- Joseph Haydn: *Quartets*
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Operas*
- Ludwig van Beethoven: *Third Symphony*
- Franz Schubert: *Songs*
- Claudio Monteverdi: *L'Orfeo*
- Igor Stravinsky: *Symphony of Psalms*

Junior year

- Miguel de Cervantes: *Don Quixote*
- Galileo Galilei: *Two New Sciences*
- Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan*
- René Descartes: *Meditations, Rules for the Direction of the Mind*
- John Milton: *Paradise Lost*

- François de La Rochefoucauld: *Maximes*
- Jean de La Fontaine: *Fables*
- Blaise Pascal: *Pensées*
- Christiaan Huygens: *Treatise on Light*, *On the Movement of Bodies by Impact*
- George Eliot: *Middlemarch*
- Baruch Spinoza: *Theologico-Political Treatise*
- John Locke: *Second Treatise of Government*
- Jean Racine: *Phèdre*
- Isaac Newton: *Principia Mathematica*
- Gottfried Leibniz: *Monadology*, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, *Essay on Dynamics*, *Philosophical Essays*, *Principles of Nature and Grace*
- Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*
- David Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *Social Contract*, *The Origin of Inequality*
- Molière: *Le Misanthrope*
- Adam Smith: *Wealth of Nations*
- Immanuel Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: *Don Giovanni*
- Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*
- Richard Dedekind: *Essay on the Theory of Numbers*
- *The American Declaration of Independence*
- *American Articles of Confederation*
- *The Constitution of the United States of America*
- *The Federalist Papers*

- Mark Twain: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- William Wordsworth: *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799*
- Essays by: Thomas Young, Brook Taylor, Leonhard Euler, Daniel Bernoulli, Hans Christian Ørsted, Michael Faraday, James Clerk Maxwell

Senior year

- United States Supreme Court opinions
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *Faust*
- Charles Darwin: *The Origin of Species*
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "*Logic*" (from the *Encyclopedia*)
- Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky: *Theory of Parallels*
- Alexis de Tocqueville: *Democracy in America*
- Abraham Lincoln: *Selected Speeches*
- Søren Kierkegaard: *Philosophical Fragments*, *Fear and Trembling*
- Richard Wagner: *Tristan und Isolde*
- Karl Marx: *Capital*, *Political and Economic Manuscripts of 1844*, *The German Ideology*
- Fyodor Dostoevsky: *The Brothers Karamazov*
- Leo Tolstoy: *War and Peace*
- Herman Melville: *Benito Cereno*
- Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- Flannery O'Connor: *Selected Stories*
- Sigmund Freud: *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*
- Booker T. Washington: *Selected Writings*

- W. E. B. Du Bois: *The Souls of Black Folk*
- Edmund Husserl: *Crisis of the European Sciences*
- Martin Heidegger: *Basic Writings*
- Albert Einstein: *Selected Papers*
- Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*
- William Faulkner: *Go Down Moses*
- Gustave Flaubert: *Un Coeur Simple*
- Virginia Woolf: *Mrs. Dalloway*
- Poems by: W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Paul Valéry, Arthur Rimbaud
- Essays by: Michael Faraday, J. J. Thomson, Hermann Minkowski, Ernest Rutherford, Clinton Davisson, Erwin Schrödinger, Niels Bohr, James Clerk Maxwell, Louis-Victor de Broglie, Werner Heisenberg, Gregor Mendel, Theodor Boveri, Walter Sutton, Thomas Hunt Morgan, George Wells Beadle and Edward Lawrie Tatum, Gerald Jay Sussman, James D. Watson and Francis Crick, François Jacob and Jacques Monod, G. H. Hardy

A New Core Texts Course in Singapore

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In early 2012 I arrived in Singapore to help create a core texts course with global content that would be part of the first-year curriculum at the soon-to-open Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). The task of designing and implementing a course based on a set of "world classics and other texts of major cultural significance" (as core texts are defined by the Association for Core Texts and Courses [ACTC]) drew upon nearly all of my previous knowledge and experience (ACTC, n.d.). My doctoral studies had embraced European intellectual history; my teaching experience had included three years in a great books program with a syllabus of core texts drawn from European culture. Prior to that, I had studied and worked in different parts of Asia for more than a decade, in the course of which I acquired considerable understanding of major cultures and languages of East Asia and the Southeast Asian archipelago. I was thrilled to join SUTD in a capacity that would allow me to combine my interests in both Asia and the West. Indeed, Singapore—an island populated

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largely by ethnic Chinese, located in the middle of vast region dominated by Islam, and marked with a history of European colonialism—seemed like the perfect place to bring it all together in a core texts course titled "World Civilizations and Texts."

A Tip

When colleagues at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) asked me to write about the experience of designing and implementing the core texts course at SUTD, I gladly accepted this chance to reflect upon my work of the past three years. Carefully reading the letter from CUHK, I took special note where it stated: "*In this globalized 21st century, university education has become more and more specialized and career-oriented.*" This is worth highlighting. These two trends, specialization and globalization, impact the acquisition of language skills, which are prerequisite for the critical thinking needed in core texts courses. In this regard, the content and structure of the core texts course at SUTD have been determined in no small part by exogenous trends that inhibit greater acquisition of language skills by Singaporean students prior to university matriculation.

Undergraduates at SUTD, like undergraduates everywhere, have been motivated to seek specialization within the academy. Career-oriented, indeed, technology-oriented, incentives contour their education long before they find their first jobs. This utilitarian focus reduces the margins for tech-bound students to develop the language skills needed to think critically about anything as complex and indeterminate as human experience. The

irony is that the pursuit of academic degrees has in many, if not most, cases become detached from any firm grounding in language skills that for centuries formed the very basis of education in all literate cultures. SUTD undergraduates, like those everywhere, are affected by the stepped-up pace of globalization, perhaps most pervasively through the digital world of instant entertainment, information, social networks, and you-name-it. The effect of this sort of globalization trend is, however, more ambiguous. It may be the case that the digital world provokes and proliferates new ideas by connecting users to faraway people, places, and things, yet simultaneously diminishes language skills needed to articulate any new ideas derived from participation in that world. The instantaneousness of the medium often compels its users to seek shortcuts for everything, so that their range of verbal expression shrinks more and more toward texts and tweets.

What does this sort of globalization mean for a core texts course aiming at global content? Does a medium that puts the whole world within easier reach simultaneously diminish the linguistic ability to develop and express ideas about the world? Does this medium strengthen or weaken understanding about humanity? Does an increasingly interconnected world motivate young people to wonder more or less about the universality and particularity of human experience? The swelling technical content of university education tends to squeeze humanistic questions like these into a shrinking forum. In this regard, the vision and leadership of institutions such as SUTD and CUHK to establish core texts courses as part of their undergraduate curriculum is highly commendable. Such courses contribute to undergraduate education by engaging students to think critically about

human experience as expressed in texts of great cultural significance. The value of this contribution to their education is unquestionable, as I hope this essay about the SUTD case in Singapore will reveal.

Let me preface my reflections on the SUTD core texts course with a tip. Anyone interested in setting up a comparable course should bear in mind how globalization and specialization combine with local factors to shape the education and attitudes of their students, especially in terms of language skills that are prerequisite for critical thinking. This will vary from country to country, from university to university, even from student to student. Instructors must assess each situation for what it is. In every case, however, factors that inhibit language skills also diminish the ability to think well about anything human. The story of the design and implementation of SUTD's core texts course cannot be told without reflecting on language issues that have constrained its possibilities.

An Idea

The idea of a humanities-based core texts course with global content as part of the first-year curriculum at SUTD was conceived by the university's collaborative partner, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which in its long experience of educating young people in technical and scientific disciplines has come to understand the importance of adding humanities, arts, and social sciences to its undergraduate curriculum. As stated on the MIT website, "*these fields empower young scientists, engineers, thinkers, and citizens—with historical and cultural perspectives, and with skills in the arts, communication, and critical thinking—to help them serve the*

world well, with innovations and lives that are rich in meaning and wisdom." (MIT, n.d.) MIT thus advised SUTD to develop a curriculum that would enrich the technology-focused education of its students, helping them to become not just engineers and entrepreneurs, but also contributors to the mind and spirit of their community. SUTD undergraduates are required to accumulate about one-quarter of their total credits toward graduation by taking courses in "Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences," a multidisciplinary cluster within SUTD that everyone here, in a typically Singaporean way, calls by an acronym, "HASS." This includes credits earned for "World Civilizations and Texts." Beyond this course title, however, the content and structure had yet to be worked out.

I was not a complete stranger to Singapore when I arrived in 2012 to take up this work. In the 1990s I worked for a major Singaporean state-linked corporation in its Jakarta office and frequently visited the headquarters. Singapore, outside of its bustling financial district, was a low-rise conurbation through which was scattered a racial and ethnic mix of Malays, Tamils, and dialect-speaking Chinese—Hokkien, Teochew, Hainanese, Cantonese, and Hakka. Despite state-sponsored language policies intended to dilute this mixture, Singapore was still a vernacular soup with many ingredients. It was not unusual to meet middle-aged Singaporeans who had assimilated two or three Chinese dialects, as well as Malay, while growing up, and then learned Mandarin or English at school. Many had gained enough proficiency in these languages to mix within different ethno-linguistic contexts. By 2012, however, a surprising degree of change had occurred in Singapore. The landscape had become saturated with middle-class growth in the form of high-rise, government-built, dormitory-like housing

estates and contrastingly spectacular shopping malls. The population had multiplied and diversified. A new generation of Singaporeans filled the schools and a new throng of immigrants crowded the public spaces. Among ethnic Chinese residents, Mandarin is now heard more than dialect, and in many settings "Singlish," a heavily accented creolized form of English, predominates over the so-called "mother tongues" (i.e., Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil). The state-sponsored language policies had taken certain effect. Many young people now reject the native languages of their parents and grandparents, as well as those of millions of people who inhabit countries surrounding their tiny island because, as Singaporeans will tell you, these languages are "not useful."

Prior to my return in 2012, I had imagined that Singapore, by dint of its mix of Chinese, Indians, Malays, and Others (the four racial categories by which Singaporeans are officially identified) might be the ideal place to create and teach a multicultural core texts course. The course at SUTD would be taught in ethnically neutral English, which has been the primary language of instruction in all government-run schools since 1987 when the state closed vernacular schools and mandated that mother tongues be taught as second languages. The imposition of Singapore's bilingual education policy is, of course, related to its declaration of English as the working language of government and business. This can be understood as a matter of practicality. Faced with the need to ensure jobs and rising incomes for Singaporeans, the state has long attracted multinational corporations to the island and educated locals for jobs in foreign-linked enterprises. Behind the state's marginalization, even stigmatization, of vernacular languages is its concern to blend Singapore's different races and ethnicities into

a single society. Only after returning to Singapore in 2012 and experiencing the classroom situation at SUTD did I fully appreciate the consequences of Singapore's bilingual education policy for the development of critical thinking skills.

A Curriculum Development Proposal

During the weeks leading up to SUTD's inaugural term in May 2012, I drafted a curriculum development proposal for "World Civilizations and Texts." It lauded the SUTD administration for including a "great books"-type course in the core curriculum at a technology-based institution, but its deeper purpose was to ascertain full backing from an administration composed of practical-minded engineering professors. If "World Civilizations and Texts" were to have a long and happy life in the core curriculum, it would require a substantial commitment of resources, especially for hiring new faculty who could teach it. With that in mind, the proposal, with quotes borrowed from SUTD's promotional literature, reaffirmed the benefit of a core texts course for technology students:

> "World Civilizations and Texts" can and should make a valuable contribution to SUTD's stated mission of "*becoming an intellectual hub and an engine of growth for Singapore and the world*." As a cross-cultural study of great ideas and fundamental beliefs that shape the minds and lives of persons who inhabit the world's largest and most influential spheres of culture, [this course] must be a worthy complement to SUTD's creative approaches to technology

> and design and a key part of preparing our students to "*become technically grounded leaders and innovators to serve societal needs*". . . . The global impact of SUTD design education will be strengthened by providing our students with greater awareness of cultures that inform and motivate different groups of people around the world.

In retrospect, I would no longer describe the course as a "*a cross-cultural study of great ideas and fundamental beliefs*." But having started with that noble, if misplaced, conception, it was then a matter of choosing which cultures would be textually represented in this global-oriented course. Giving weight to Singapore's location, demographics, and history—with its deep layers of Indian, Chinese, European, and Islamic influences—it seemed sensible to draw a set of core texts from those four cultural groups.

Sensible, but also logically inconsistent. Three of the groups refer to geographic regions in which the cultures, despite being diasporic, remain centered, while one of the groups refers to a religion whose adherents live mostly outside the geographic region from which it first emerged. Although problematic, this set of cultures was nonetheless workable. Not only are all four abundantly represented in Singapore's population, but these same four also account for a majority of the world's population. Moreover, all four have produced great bodies of literature from which a few core texts could be drawn for the course.

The primary emphasis of the course over the past three years has shifted from cultural content to critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills have always been an important component of the course, but these

skills were originally subordinated, at least rhetorically, to the dialogic teaching method. As stated in the proposal:

> [Dialogue] requires [students] to challenge assumptions and to work out the meaning of things that have no clear answers. Dialogue is about learning to see the world in different ways and to appreciate different perspectives…. [The] nuanced language [of core texts drawn from Indian, Chinese, European, and Islamic cultures] reflects the complexity of human experience…. Intensive and close reading of these texts paired with dialogue fosters the development of critical thinking skills.

The proposal emphasized dialogic method for internal reasons. "World Civilizations and Texts" had to show that it was in full compliance with the SUTD administration's mandate to introduce "active learning" into every classroom. This catchphrase signifies a variety of pedagogies that engage students as fully as possible in doing things and thinking about what they are doing. Its incorporation into the classroom brings welcome change to undergraduate engineering programs that traditionally consist of a one-way flow of information from professors to students in lectures delivered to large audiences. SUTD seeks to revolutionize traditional engineering pedagogy in Singapore by assigning students to small cohorts in which they interact with instructors, with each other, and with gadgets in order to assimilate concepts that are applicable to the physical world. "World Civilizations and Texts" felt pressure to adopt the active learning pedagogies that were being developed for Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and other courses in

SUTD's first-year core curriculum. Hence, the decision for the proposal to emphasize dialogue—the original form of active learning that has lost none of its effectiveness over time. No gadget in the classroom can deepen understanding of human meanings as effectively as interlocution between a student and a knowledgeable teacher.

A crucial part of the curriculum development proposal was its plea for hiring the right sort of faculty to become those interlocutors. The success of the course depended on having instructors who could translate and interpret core texts from Indian, Chinese, European, and Islamic traditions. As stated in the proposal:

> [The course] requires scholars who have assiduously compiled a wealth of cultural knowledge that enables them to reconstruct the mental world of images, symbols and meanings in a [core text], and to interpret its content.

The ability to facilitate students' interpretations of textual artifacts drawn from distant times and alien places should not be taken for granted. Not every Ph.D. is trained to do this, nor has an aptitude for it.

The administration showed its appreciation of this point by approving a round of job searches for faculty with relevant training and experience to teach "World Civilizations and Texts." In the following months, SUTD was fortunate to attract accomplished new faculty with complementary areas of expertise. These included a scholar of South Asian classical languages whose research interests included the transmission of Buddhist texts from Ceylon to mainland Southeast Asia; a classicist in Greek and Latin literature and philosophy, whose research was expanding to include Persian

Neo-Platonism; a newly minted Ph.D. in comparative literature and critical theory, whose pursuit of doctoral studies followed upon his success as a journalist covering Islamist movements; and a student of Ming literature, including Neo-Confucian philosophy and lyrical works of fiction. These new faculty went a long way toward fulfilling the teaching needs for a humanities-based core texts course with global content.

Having assembled a multicultural, multilingual, and multidisciplinary team with shared interests in philology, literature, and history, I had hoped, perhaps a little too idealistically, that we might form a college of fellows in pursuit of shared knowledge. As this hope was expressed in the proposal:

> The instructors will meet weekly to share their expertise, providing each other with greater cultural context for the next assigned reading and conducting a dialogue about it. They will thus hone their classroom pedagogy by practicing it with each other.

In reality, everyone's time has been constrained by various demands, making it difficult for the team to run its own formal seminar each week. Nevertheless, the collegiality among us leads to fruitful discussions when we gather informally, even if our High Table has a red plastic top and sits under a whizzing fan at a nearby *kopitiam*.

A Syllabus

Syllabus design has been the most challenging and contentious of all tasks related to "World Civilizations and Texts." Indeed, the problems with our syllabus have yet to be fully resolved. This should not, however,

discourage anyone at other institutions from starting a new multicultural core texts course. Any group of persons drawn from different humanities disciplines and area studies who collaborate for this purpose will inevitably clash over many things, but that does not preclude the possibility that they might produce a more coherent set of assigned readings. To help prepare the path for others, I recount the bumps and curves of the course run at SUTD.

Ancient and Classical

Having secured resources for the long-term development of the core texts course, the next step was to come up with a syllabus design. Conceived as a two-term sequence, "World Civilizations and Texts I" and "World Civilizations and Texts II" would be organized chronologically: ancient and classical texts in the first term, modern texts in the second term. A single term at SUTD has 14 weeks, but the number of weeks that can be devoted to reading and discussing core texts shrinks when the following allowances are made: introduction (Week 1); mid-term break (Week 7); final exams (Week 14); and "2D," a signature component of the SUTD undergraduate education, in which for one dedicated week, first-year courses stop coursework and instead simultaneously work on a design challenge problem (Week 9). This leaves only ten weeks to cover a set of core texts drawn from Indian, Chinese, European, and Islamic cultures and to engage students in critical thinking about them through dialogue and other exercises. Cramming both broad coverage and particular skills into one short term would become a drawback to the syllabus.

Choosing texts for the first term seemed as if it would be relatively easy. For each of the four cultures we would simply select among their

greatest books of wisdom literature (i.e., texts often reverenced as scripture) and their greatest works of literary imagination (i.e., epic poems or prose narratives). This mix of literary genres seemed pedagogically sound. It also seemed feasible. Such works from Indian, Chinese, European, and Islamic cultures are readily available in English translations. Adhering to a principle of selecting one core text of wisdom literature and another text of literary imagination from each of the four cultures, the syllabus quickly started to fill with titles: *The Bhagavad Gita* and *The Ramayana*; the *Analects* and *Journey to the West*; *Genesis* and *The Odyssey*; the *Qur'an* and *The Arabian Nights*. These eight core texts were assigned for eight of the ten weeks. So far, so good.

But the principle behind this selection presented problems in practice. The foundations of European culture are both classical and Christian, which complicated our selection. We decided to represent both classical and Christian traditions, each by a piece of wisdom literature and one of literary imagination. Thus, Homer's *The Odyssey* was paired with Plato's *The Republic*. We kept *Genesis*, as part of the *Torah*, but added *Letter to the Romans*, which pivots on a Christian interpretation of the *Torah*. We also added *The Divine Comedy*, which synthesizes Europe's classical legacy with its medieval Christianity. Chinese culture, understood as composite of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist traditions, also complicated our principle of selection. Our choice of wisdom literature now included *Chuang Tzu* and *The First Sermon of the Buddha*, the latter having a geographic locus of origin in India, but a more enduring influence in China. *Journey to the West*, which we had already chosen as a work of literary imagination, syncretizes the three composite traditions of China. Our reading list thus swelled with

five additional core texts, but there were only two weeks on the syllabus for which no readings had yet been assigned: one of these weeks would go to *The Republic* and the other to *The Divine Comedy*. To squeeze in the three other texts we doubled the readings for three other weeks: *Letter to the Romans* would be paired with *Genesis*, *Chuang Tzu* with *Analects*, and *The First Sermon of the Buddha* with *Journey to the West*.

This adjustment in our selection of texts resulted in a cramped syllabus that looked like this:

Week 1	Introduction
Week 2	*The Odyssey*
Week 3	*The Republic*
Week 4	*Analects* and *Chuang Tzu*
Week 5	*Journey to the West* and *The First Sermon of the Buddha*
Week 6	*The Bhagavad Gita*
Week 7	Mid-term Break
Week 8	*Ramayana*
Week 9	2D Week
Week 10	*Genesis* and *Letter to the Romans*
Week 11	*Divine Comedy*
Week 12	*The Qur'an*
Week 13	*Arabian Nights*
Week 14	Exam Week

Immediately, the question arose: how much reading could we expect students to complete each week? Seeking to uphold the academic standards

of SUTD's collaborative partner, we checked the syllabus of a comparable introductory humanities course taught at MIT. For many lengthy texts that course also allotted one week, and in most instances assigned only partial readings rather than the entire text. We followed MIT's example in this case, but with greater leniency. About 20 percent of the undergraduates at SUTD would be from other countries in Asia. Many of them, unlike Singaporeans, would not have received twelve years of primary and secondary schooling with English as the language of instruction. I was concerned more about the pace required for these students to do the reading properly than about their ability to do it properly at any pace. We halved the amount of reading that introductory humanities courses at MIT assign to undergraduates, setting the target for SUTD students at 100 pages per week. Our syllabus may have been packed with titles, but it skimped on the total amount of reading.

Despite the attention lavished on the design of this syllabus, it glared with shortcomings and inconsistencies. First, assigning European works for six of ten weeks in a course that is supposed to be global in content skewed the syllabus toward a Western bias, even though the cradle of human civilization lies in the East. Second, assigning certain versions of a work raised the question of whether the text being assigned really counts as a core text. For example, *The Ramayana*, consisting of 24,000 verses, is too lengthy to be assigned in its entirety. Wanting to familiarize students with the narrative of *The Ramayana*, an integral part of folklore virtually everywhere in Southeast Asia (except Singapore), we chose to assign R. K. Narayan's re-telling of *The Ramayana*, published by Penguin with the subtitle, "*A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic*." Assigning prose chapters from this text allowed students to grasp the basic narrative,

but also deprived them of experiencing the journey of Rama in its classic verse form. A similar problem was encountered by assigning the central chapters from Richard Lattimore's prose version of *The Odyssey*. And then there was the problem of chronology. How late into history can the "ancient and classical" period be stretched? Far enough, presumably, to include *The Divine Comedy*, written in the 14th century, when the universe was still described in Ptolemaic terms and the Christian culture of Europe subsumed the pagan culture of Greece and Rome. But we were not certain whether this period could be stretched far enough to include *Journey to the West*, composed at the end of the 16th century. The Chinese literary tradition challenged our criterion for selecting core texts. The earliest Chinese works of literary imagination that qualify as epic seem to be its four great classic novels, of which *Journey to West* is one. But even the oldest of these, *Water Margin*, was not written until the late 14th century, ages after *The Odyssey*, the *Ramayana*, and even *The Arabian Nights* had appeared in other parts of the world.

In the end, this experience of syllabus design showed that no reading list composed of ancient and classical texts and aimed at global content will ever please everyone. This conclusion holds even more strongly in the case of designing a syllabus of modern texts aimed at global content.

Modern

For the second term syllabus, we again chose Indian, Chinese, European, and Islamic cultures to stand in for "World Civilizations," but we had to adjust our categories for selecting texts. Anything modern is almost certainly too recent to have gained status as "wisdom literature."

Comprehensive conceptions of the universe and humanity's place within it now fall under more discrete categories like philosophy, ideology, the novel, and even the essay. Thus compelled to adjust the selection criteria, we decided to choose from each of the four cultures at least one modern text that might be categorized as theoretical and at least one other that might be categorized as narrative. These two adjusted criteria seemed straightforward, but they led to a syllabus with unintended results.

Before selection of texts began, we first had to define "modern" and decide when and where this break with the past occurred. Our definition had to be sustainable across Indian, Chinese, European, and Islamic cultures, and be extendable to the rest of the world. There are, of course, multiple forms of modernity, each determined differently, from culture to culture, but making all those determinations in a way that stands up to rigorous examination lies beyond the scope of our course, and even outside the academic competency of our small faculty. Nonetheless, we ventured to say that the modern era begins with the release of an uncontainable new dynamism that transforms, obscures, or eradicates traditional modes of thinking and acting. No Ph.D. is needed to see that between the 17th and 20th centuries European culture and its offshoots manifested such dynamism with a degree of global influence unmatched by any other culture. No single event in Europe was the catalyst for everything modern in the world, but the periodization of our syllabus compelled us to specify something that marks the onset of modernity. This might have been anything from the Copernican Revolution to the French Revolution. Having conceived "World Civilizations and Texts" as a humanities-based core texts course concerned with critical thinking, we decided upon the Cogito Argument posited by

Descartes in the 17th century. This event, clearly and distinctly, inspired an intellectual revolution of tremendous consequence. From this point on, authority and tradition no longer went unchallenged in the determination of knowledge. Intellectual legitimacy would increasingly be claimed by the rational mind of the individual. Here is the basis for key aspects of many, if not most, modernities—individual liberty, secular rationalism, democracy, gender equality, and the ascendancy of markets as shapers of society. The first text we selected for our syllabus was *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641).

It was not necessary that every text on the syllabus be characterized by this "epistemic turn" that we had chosen to denote modernity. Indeed, the rest of the syllabus was filled with texts that had little or nothing to do with epistemology. Two exceptions were *Othello* and *Frankenstein*, both of which happen to raise the question of how we know what we know. But our primary reason for including these two texts was our concession to a sliver of advice from MIT humanities professors (which was their one and only direct intervention in the design of our syllabus): the modern sequence of "World Civilizations and Texts" should include a play by Shakespeare and at least one work by a woman author. *Othello* and *Frankenstein* fit the bill. The drama of "the Moor of Venice" captures modern tensions about race, gender, and multicultural encounters that have roused the world in recent centuries. As for the novel of "the Modern Prometheus," we thought it might serve as a cautionary tale to enthusiastic inventors of the future who enroll at SUTD in the spirit of the university's marketing slogan, "A Better World by Design." The desire of SUTD students to master technology is not just altruistic, but probably also self-interested. Certainly, their parents,

who foot the bills for tuition, see the SUTD degree as a ticket for securing a niche in a competitive world dominated by global capitalism. So we rounded out the European core texts for the second term with both a moral justification and a moral repudiation of that system: *Wealth of Nations* and *Communist Manifesto*: Our syllabus so far had three works that fit the theoretical criterion and two that fit the narrative one.

It was much more challenging to select modern works of Indian, Chinese, and Islamic origins. Surprisingly little literature produced by these three cultures between 1600 and 1900 is easily available in English translation. We did not want students to think that these cultures were merely tardy latecomers to modernity, but it would be hard to avoid giving this impression if we could not find any supporting texts by Indian, Chinese, or Muslim authors that date from the three centuries prior to 1900. But nearly every modern Indian, Chinese, or Muslim text of major cultural significance that has been translated into English is the work of a 20th-century writer. As long as there exists a dearth of translation for non-Western literature for the period 1600–1900, it will be difficult to design a core texts course that is both modern and global in perspective.

Searching for modern Chinese narratives that are available in English translation, we encountered a conspicuous void between the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), when rapid growth of an urban merchant class coincided with the appearance of the four great classic novels of China, and the Republican era (1912–1949), when a cacophony of new ideas and literary forms sprang from Chinese youth. For the entire Qing dynasty (1644–1912), which spans most of the period we had defined as modern, we came up with only one translated narrative that qualifies as a core text, *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

Among the many translated narratives composed after the collapse of the imperial system in the early 1900s, we turned to the short stories of Lu Xun, widely regarded as the father of modern Chinese literature, and chose "Diary of a Madman." Seeking gender balance, we added two short stories by women authors, *Miss Sophia's Diary* by Ding Ling and *No Name Woman* by Maxine Hong Kingston. The latter was born in the United States and writes in English, but we included her Chinese-American narrative because it captures tensions about race, gender, and multicultural encounters, as mentioned in our selection of *Othello*.

There seem to be even fewer obvious choices for modern narratives produced by Indian and Islamic cultures. As in the Chinese case, we found a paucity of English translations for modern works composed prior to the 20th century. Our choice of a modern narrative from Indian culture quickly boiled down to a novel by Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913). *Broken Nest* was selected primarily for its brevity, secondarily for its gender focus. Seeking a modern narrative from Islamic culture, we considered the works of the only two Muslim writers who have been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, Naguib Mahfouz (1988) and Orhan Pamuk (2006). We also considered Salman Rushdie, both as an Indian and as a Muslim writer. But works of these three writers perhaps need to withstand the test of time before they are indisputably deemed core texts. Furthermore, most novels by Mahfouz, Pamuk, and Rushdie simply have too many pages for our students to read them in a single week. Brevity again dictated our choice. We selected *Season of Migration to the North* by Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih. Translated into a score of languages in the half-century since it was written in Arabic,

it also has a clear inter-textual connection with *Othello*, which was already on our syllabus.

Selecting modern theoretical works by non-Western writers, we again found that few works composed between 1600 and 1900 are available in English translation. When I queried some humanities scholars of modern China, India, and the Islamic world who are based at American universities (but not all of whom are American), they concurred that such a dearth exists. Moreover, they similarly opined that important theoretical works emanating from these three cultures during the modern period tend to be more ideological than philosophical. So, I compiled a short list of enormously influential ideologues. In the case of modern India, Mahatma Gandhi; hence our selection of *Hindu Swaraj* (1909). In the case of China, Mao Zedong; hence our selection of *Yan'an Talks on Art and Literature* (1942). And in the case of the Islamic world, Sayyid Qutb; hence our selection of *Milestones* (1964), a foundational text for some of the major Islamist movements of the past half-century. Although we had reservations about their lack of literary merit, these texts have held unquestionable influence within their cultural spheres. Moreover, the three texts by Gandhi, Mao, and Qutb had the virtue of being short enough to be read in their entirety in one week. They made the cut.

Our second term syllabus ended up looking like this:

Week 1 *Othello* (1603)

Week 2 *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641)

Week 3 *Wealth of Nations* (1776) / *Communist Manifesto* (1848)

Week 4 *Frankenstein* (1818)

Week 5 *Dream of the Red Chamber* (mid-1700s)

Week 6	*Diary of a Madman* (1918)/ *Yan'an Talks on Art and Literature* (1942)
Week 7	Mid-term Break
Week 8	*Miss Sophia's Diary* (1927)/ *No Name Woman* (1976)
Week 9	*Hindu Swaraj* (1909)
Week 10	2D Week
Week 11	*Broken Nest* (1901)
Week 12	*Milestones* (1964)
Week 13	*Season of Migration to the North* (1966)
Week 14	Final Exams

This was an improvement over the first term. It gave greater representation to non-Western cultures, which now accounted for nine of the fourteen works on the reading list. It also represented women writers, a group entirely missing from the ancient and classical syllabus. And all these texts, except for *Wealth of Nations* and *Dream of the Red Chamber*, were short enough to be assigned reading in their entirety.

The improvements on this syllabus were, however, offset by imbalances that were unintentional, even irresolvable. It would be difficult to counter the impression that Asia was a slow responder to modernity if we could not find more than one non-Western work composed between 1600 and 1900 that is easily available in English translation (i.e., *Dream of the Red Chamber*). Consequently, all but one of the works of Indian, Chinese and Muslim origin on the syllabus date from the 20th century. The syllabus was lopsided with modern European works from the 17th, 18th, and 19th

centuries. Contrary to our intentions, this carefully constructed syllabus suggested that modernity is a Western phenomenon to which the rest of the world reacted slowly, and in important cases (i.e., Gandhi, Mao, Qutb) reacted negatively.

As for the mechanics of the course, each week there would be a one-hour lecture and a two-hour recitation conducted in small groups not exceeding 17 students. The administration gave "World Civilizations and Texts" a 3-0-9 designation, meaning each week students must have three hours of in-class contact with faculty, zero hours of lab, and nine hours of preparation outside class. Final grades would be assessed on the basis of participation in recitation, two five-page papers, and a final exam. The first would be most heavily weighted, given that dialogue about the core texts in recitation was intended to provide students with their most valuable learning experiences in this course.

Our syllabus was now ready to be tested.

An Experiment

The core texts course at SUTD from the start has been an experiment. Even before distributing the first term syllabus on the first day of classes, we knew that it had flaws. Some were due to our own shortcomings. For example, we emphasized coverage of all four cultures, yet we also allotted a disproportionate number of weeks to European texts. Others were due to shortcomings of a start-up university still a few months away from opening its doors. At that early point we had not yet assembled a faculty that included

at least one literary minded scholar for each of the cultures represented on our syllabus. Teaching certain of these core texts for the first time would be a case of the blind leading the blind. Trial and error was our only way to go.

If, on the other hand, this global core texts course was to be run as an experiment, then what better laboratory could be hoped for than Singapore? By all appearances, Singaporeans ought to be extraordinarily cosmopolitan. "Multiculturalism" is a mantra in Singapore, appearing in statement after statement after statement. Singaporeans entering university have already undergone twelve years of education in English as a so-called "first language," and they have been required to study to the point of proficiency, it is claimed, either Mandarin, Malay, or Tamil (or, in some cases, another South Asian language) as so-called "mother tongue." If the world is now entering the Asian Century in which dynamism shifts from West to East, then no place seems better positioned than Singapore to become its hub. A major motivation for my accepting the job at SUTD was a desire to take part in educating a generation of technological innovators who are expected to become citizens of the world in this new century. I envisioned SUTD as the ideal place for designing and implementing a multicultural core texts course.

Moving from the design of the syllabus to its implementation in lectures, recitations, and graded assignments, I would learn more about Singapore and the Singaporean way of doing things. While globalization of society and specialization of academic degrees are phenomena found everywhere, in Singapore they combine with local factors to create a particular classroom environment. Given the strong relationship that usually holds between language and culture, I had imagined that

Singaporean students, supposedly proficient in their so-called "mother tongues," would bring valuable insights into the reading of texts drawn from the cultures that are their own heritage. I further thought that twelve years of primary and secondary education conducted in English would have prepared them to read, think, and talk in meaningful ways about texts written in or translated into that common language. Our syllabus was thus designed in anticipation of multicultural Singaporean students who would share a high degree of fluency in English. This proved a miscalculation on our part. In reality, Singaporean students at SUTD are more multiracial than multicultural. Their racial identity seems much stronger than their affiliation to any culture historically associated with that identity. This is due in part to their lack of fluency in a language that might provide full access to such a culture. Many are barely able to communicate with their own grandparents. If they are ignorant of the language and culture of their own grandparents, they are all the more ignorant of the mother tongues and cultural legacies of other Singaporeans whose racial identity differs from their own. Many are trapped in a language limbo from which it is hard to move beyond a contemporary culture of work and consumption. Our syllabus would need rethinking and revising.

Lectures

As originally conceived, "World Civilizations and Texts" was not meant to include lectures. Students would be better served by engaging them more actively in dialogue about the texts. But teaching the course entirely in recitation sections capped at 17 students would have stretched our faculty to a breaking point. When SUTD's doors opened for the first

time in May 2012, the entire first-year class of 340 students would be registered for "World Civilizations and Texts I." In order for the course to fulfill three hours of faculty contact per week, we could have scheduled either small group recitations of 90 minutes twice a week, or a 60-minute lecture at the start of each week followed by a 120-minute recitation later in the week. We opted for the latter. Every original member of the small HASS faculty had been conscripted to teach "World Civilizations and Texts I," including social scientists whose graduate training was far afield from the humanities disciplines best suited for teaching a core texts course. Even the most suitably trained among us would be prone to conduct a dialogue with flagging enthusiasm and worn-sounding ideas, if forced to repeat that dialogue too many times in one week.

Seeking first and foremost to ensure high quality instruction, we also needed to prevent faculty burnout. The 60-minute lectures on Mondays, delivered to all 340 students by individual members of the HASS faculty on a rotating basis, helped achieve both objectives. Lectures not only provided an antidote for exhaustion from repetitive teaching, but also provided a block of time each week for introducing historical and cultural contexts for the assigned readings. Despite these advantages, lectures during the first year strained our faculty in other ways. Our lectures had to cover certain texts and topics for which HASS did not yet have instructors with relevant training or experience. Some lectures were written and delivered by faculty forced to think and perform too far outside of their own disciplines. Content suffered.

Three years later, we have added new faculty, as mentioned above, who are better prepared for teaching this humanities-based core texts course.

Original members of the faculty who hold degrees in a social science or another discipline have meanwhile been transitioned to teach courses within their own fields. With a reconstituted team of instructors, "World Civilizations and Texts" has been able to deliver lectures more consistent in format and quality. Our lectures introduce the history of a text, provide close readings of some key passages, and suggest different interpretations.

Recitation

Recitation, which allows the sort of intensive and continuous interaction between faculty and students needed to teach critical reading, writing, and thinking skills, has put to the test everything involved in the syllabus design. The team of instructors has debated *ad nauseum* the suitability of certain core texts, written assignments, and pedagogical methods for developing critical thinking skills. For my own part, I have also given much consideration to exogenous factors that affect the acquisition of these skills by SUTD students. In the spirit of SUTD, I hope to contribute toward a better world, or at least toward the betterment of students who seek "A Better World by Design." Each step in that direction springs from observations made in recitation.

Before the first term began I was already aware of problems with the syllabus. After the term began I grew increasingly aware of other problems concerned less with the syllabus *per se*, and more with the students' ability to read even the simplified and truncated readings on the syllabus. Students who arrived in recitation each week having completed the assigned reading were an exception. Students, who were able to understand fully what they had read, even when close readings of key passages were conducted in

recitation, were perhaps just as much an exception. This was often the case not only for foreign students, but also for Singaporeans, whose twelve years of schooling in English as the primary language of instruction should have bestowed them with an advantage. All students were capable of reciting long strings of words that appeared on a printed page, but few could adequately interpret their aggregate meaning, or even define all the vocabulary. Students able to recite the text, without being able to explicate it, would nonetheless claim to have read it. But that is like swallowing food without chewing it, let alone digesting it. The nutritional value is lost. Their passive mode of reading was largely disconnected from the activity of thinking. The amount of time students set aside to prepare for recitation each week seemed nowhere near the nine hours stipulated by the course's "3-0-9" designation. There were, of course, exceptional students. I readily acknowledge and praise those students who arrived at SUTD not only with the quantitative skills needed to compute data, but also with the verbal skills needed to interpret texts. These students were as good as any undergraduates in any humanities course taught at MIT or elsewhere. Aside from these exceptional students, instructors generally faced the same two problems: how to get students to do the assigned reading properly before recitation, and how to get them to reflect upon it well enough to develop an interpretation that they could defend in speech and in writing.

Resolving these two problems was all the more important in light of the particular texts we were introducing. Most SUTD undergraduates have been tracked for math and science from an early age with little or no training in humanist disciplines. This void may be attributed, at least in part, to the elevation of what many educated Singaporeans term "useful" knowledge

and skills; i.e., what is directly applicable to performing a task or landing a job. Consequently, some students seemed by default to read everything as if it were a textbook or an instruction manual. Other students in the first term tended to read works of wisdom literature either literally or canonically. In the second term, they showed a similar attitude to the ideological works by Gandhi, Mao, and Qutb. So it did not help that our syllabus had described this global core texts course as "*a cross-cultural study of great ideas and fundamental beliefs*." Some students assumed that these texts were being assigned for didactic purposes, when the actual purpose was to provoke them into questioning their contents and developing their own well-argued and evidence-supported interpretations. The flame of free inquiry barely flickered.

Moreover, many students tended to read these texts synecdochically, as representative of the entire civilization out of which the work emerged. They ended up essentializing cultures in distorted ways. Singaporean students of Chinese ethnicity did this even in the case of Chinese culture after having read Confucius' *Analects*. In de-Sinicized Singapore the *Analects* is a foreign text. Evidently, many Singaporean students know little about even the culture historically tied to the race marked on their own ID cards. Misconstrual is hard to avoid among readers with little predisposition to think about culture. If SUTD students are to become "*technically grounded leaders and innovators to serve societal needs,*" they will need to know many things that are not directly applicable to performing a task or landing a job.

Becoming aware of the misconstrued ways that students read core texts, our instructors have retreated from cultural content (without surrendering

it entirely) while shifting more toward critical skills. Experience has taught us that the course cannot cover both equally well. The course can, however, focus on critical skills to a degree that steers students away from simplistic interpretations and helps them avoid reductive thinking about anything as complex and protean as an entire culture.

Just as the close readings in recitation showed a strong need for improvement in critical reading skills, the submission of five-page papers showed an even stronger need for improvement in critical writing skills. Most students struggle to describe or explain in writing anything that is humanly complex or ambiguous. This is at least partly attributable to their general failure to look below the surface of a text. Hence, a shortcoming in critical thinking accompanies the weakness in writing skills. It is not unusual for SUTD's foreign students, who come from India, Malaysia, and elsewhere, to outperform local students in this skill area. It seems that regular study and practice of critical writing skills are often pushed aside in Singaporean secondary schools to allow greater concentration on math and science skills. As a consequence, we could not ask students who are unable to write a proper paragraph to write a five-page paper. We needed to come up with written assignments that are more concise, more focused, and more frequent. "World Civilizations and Texts" was not meant to be a remedial course, but most students enrolled in it are unable to develop a defensible interpretation of a core text without being instructed in some basic forms of literacy.

The excellence in mathematics and natural sciences that Singaporean students achieve prior to matriculation at SUTD contrasts notably with

their underdeveloped language skills. Curious about this situation, I visited a group of English teachers at a two-year junior college that sends a number of its graduates to SUTD. They nodded in affirmation as I shared my observations. They lamented the excessive pressure to prepare students for the "General Paper" portion of the Cambridge A level exams. This compels them to use class time for presenting magazine articles and newspaper editorials, rather than any meaningful literature. Students on the math and science track who clearly need remedial instruction in English often succeed anyway within the existing secondary school system. There is little motivation for them to master language skills (in English, as well as in mother tongue) to the same degree that they master skills in mathematics and the natural sciences. It is unfortunate that the Singaporean system overemphasizes quantitative skills at the expense of verbal skills. Those who supervise the system might heed the aphorism: "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

In order to get our students to complete the assigned reading before recitation, the instructors developed in-class quizzes. During the first ten minutes of recitation students are given a sheet on which is printed a key passage from the assigned reading for that week. If students have diligently read the text, they should quickly recognize the passage as one that indicates, for example, a turning point, a climax, or a thesis. Ten minutes are sufficient for students to: (1) situate the passage within the text (e.g., Where does it appear? Who is the speaker?); (2) interpret its meaning within the immediate context where appears; and (3) explain its significance to the text as a whole. At the beginning of the term, when even

the most diligent students struggled to read humanist texts, many students failed the quizzes. But a failing grade can motivate in positive ways. Nearly all students decided that it was in their interest to complete the assigned reading before recitation. Consequently, they showed notable improvement on their quiz scores.

I try to motivate students by playing to their existing strengths. One way is to encourage them to think about empirical methods they have mastered in the natural sciences. When I rhetorically ask whether they observe biological or chemical phenomena in the same manner as they view images in a kaleidoscope (i.e., something at which they might momentarily take a look, and then cast aside) they laugh. Nevertheless, the kaleidoscope example comes close to the way they read words formed by ink on the white page of a core text. When it comes to observing natural phenomena, however, SUTD students instinctively gather data, search for patterns, and develop explanations. Works of literature, I suggest, are intricate compositions analogous to chemical bonds and living organisms. To interpret a piece of writing it too must be analyzed into parts and patterns. There are certainly other, and better, ways of reading literary texts, but this particular way helps first-year students at SUTD gain confidence to tackle a piece of writing that might otherwise intimidate them. I guide students in this exercise every week until they are able on their own to identify parts and discover patterns. Most are competent by mid-term.

This method helps students connect form with content. When we switch focus to the latter and seek to interpret that content for meaning, SUTD students face a different set of challenges. This may be attributed in part

to their misplaced belief that every question has only one correct answer, a prejudice perhaps developed from habitually solving problem sets in math and science courses. Singaporean students in particular suffer an obvious dread of giving a wrong answer in the presence of their peers. Convincing them that a work can be interpreted in different ways, each valid as long as it is well reasoned and backed by textual evidence, is perhaps the most valuable outcome of this entire method. This is not easy to do.

Many students tend to respond to texts with feelings or beliefs that they are unable to ground in the text. Some are frustrated by my repeated insistence that they direct their opinion back to the text and indicate a passage that can ground it. This is especially true for some core texts drawn from a culture that a student thinks is "his" or "hers." A persistent minority seems incapable of performing a critical reading of a scriptural text such as the Bible. I suspect that some such students may adhere to one of the Pentecostal forms of Protestant Christianity that have grown rapidly in Singapore. This might help explain some of the strongly held attitudes against any critical reading of the Bible. I did not anticipate that some students would hold greater prejudice toward a text they consider their own than one drawn from a culture of the "other." Insofar as it is unlikely that readings widely regarded as scriptural will be removed from a syllabus of ancient and classical core texts, the challenge of persuading students to apply critical methods to their reading of the Bible, the Qur'an, and other scriptural texts will persist. Regardless of which core text we are reading in class, I prioritize the importance of questions over answers. As I repeatedly remind students: not every human problem can be solved, but

this does not diminish the problem. The fulfillment of one's human potential is fundamentally dependent on being able to identify human problems and ask meaningful questions.

A Revision

After three years of experimenting with "World Civilizations and Texts I" and "World Civilizations and Texts II," the faculty is embarking on a radical revision of the course. Most apparent is the change of title to "World Texts and Interpretations." The new title reflects its shift away from cultural content and toward critical thinking skills. Also apparent is the dropping of its roman numerals. The two-term sequence has been reduced to one-term for institutional reasons, explained here. As part of a start-up university with limited resources, the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, or HASS, program deployed its recently increased humanities faculty full-time to teach the core texts course to all first-year students. The social sciences faculty were transitioned to develop and teach elective courses to upper class students. An unintended dichotomy ensued within HASS: the core course was humanities-based, but nearly all electives were in social sciences. By reducing the core texts course to one term we were able to open a space in the first-year curriculum for a new mandatory course in social sciences. This has also freed the humanities faculty to develop and teach elective courses in the humanities. The redeployment of faculty resources will be optimized by increasing the size of recitation sections to 20 students, which HASS holds as the upper limit. Beyond this number it is hardly possible to hold a meaningful discussion in which all can

participate. The improved balance between humanities and social sciences within HASS (the "A" for arts has yet to be introduced) should benefit undergraduate education of SUTD.

In reducing the core texts course to a single term, the faculty contended over which works to include on the revised syllabus. Most insisted on reducing the number of titles for assigned required reading. Many were dissatisfied with having to teach texts from different cultures for which they lack formal training. Some, resisting the presence on the syllabus of wisdom literature that holds canonical status among various world religions, proposed interesting alternative texts from those same religious traditions. When the dust had settled, however, everyone had finally come to recognize the value of retaining a multicultural selection of texts, and retaining even some of the most canonical titles from the original syllabus. Our reasons for this are reflected in the new course description:

> Before the development of the *humanities*, there existed *textual expressions* of human experience. Such texts have endured for centuries and spread far beyond their locus of origin. As a result of their enduring influence, these texts have invited and continue to invite a diverse array of interpretations from many different perspectives.

By including core texts such as *Genesis*, *Qur'an*, *Analects*, and *Bhagavad Gita*, the revision introduces students to works that, having served for centuries as spiritual, moral, and intellectual reference points, also exist as sources for the inter-textual character of much literature. The content and skills included in SUTD's revised core texts course are thus expected to

serve as prerequisites for a number of upper-level elective courses in the humanities.

The assigned readings for the revised course appear on the syllabus as follows:

Week 1	Introduction
Week 2	*Symposium* (entire)
Week 3	Secondary text paired to *Symposium*
Week 4	*Genesis* (entire) and *Qur'an* (selected readings)
Week 5	Secondary text paired to *Genesis* and/or *Qur'an*
Week 6	*Analects* (entire)
Week 7	Mid-term Break
Week 8	Secondary text paired to *Analects*
Week 9	*Bhagavad Gita* (entire)
Week 10	2D Week
Week 11	Secondary text paired to *Bhagavad Gita*
Week 12	*Arabian Nights* (selected readings)
Week 13	Secondary text paired to Arabian Nights
Week 14	Final Exams

Thus, each primary text is paired with a secondary text to create a two-week module. In the second week of each module students will be exposed to a thematically related text that acts as a lens through which they can explore the meaning of the core text in new ways. This dialogic process enriches students' reading experience and provides a model for constructing an argument about the core text. With each instructor having discretion to choose the secondary text for his or her recitation sections, the revised core

text course will no longer have a completely uniform syllabus. Instead, a great deal of variation is built around a uniform set of core texts and similar written assignments. This variability is the inevitable result of encouraging faculty to take a greater stake in the course by allowing them, within certain parameters, to tailor the course to their own strengths and interests. Taking into account the relative popularity of modern texts that were assigned reading in the second term of the original course, but which have been dropped from the uniform portion of the revised course, I have decided to pair each primary core text with a relevant modern work in the second week of each module. For example, in the first iteration of the revised course I am pairing *Symposium* with Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*; *Genesis* with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; and *Analects* with Lu Xun's *The True Story of Ah Q*. Other instructors are pairing the primary core texts with quite different secondary works.

We will continue to combine lecture with recitation, although the number of lectures is halved because there is only one lecture for each two-week module. On alternate Mondays when there is no scheduled lecture, instructors will meet with their recitation sections for independently organized activities. I plan to use this additional time to work with students on their critical writing skills. Line-by-line, even word-by-word, we will critique student responses to in-class quizzes, which are retained in the revised course. Written assignments for the revised course include three short papers that require students to focus on the dialogic dimension of a primary text, which is read by all first-year students, and a secondary text, which is chosen at the discretion of an instructor. The importance of writing skills for effective communication cannot be overstated. The

university administration, which has come to appreciate this importance for technology-based students, is now establishing a writing program within SUTD. It must become the responsibility of all faculties across the university, and not just the humanities faculty, to support students in achieving better writing skills. SUTD recognizes that engineers must develop their uniquely human capacity for language if they are to become effective "*innovators to serve societal needs.*"

The rump lecture component of the course may not have a long life. As soon as SUTD hires an ample humanities faculty, we should drop lectures altogether and embrace the original idea of conducting the course entirely in recitation. These small sections are better suited than lectures for teaching critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.

The revised core texts course at SUTD, at least as much as its predecessor, is being run as an experiment. I believe it stands up to measure as a *core texts course*, although the variability in its content, introduced to encourage greater innovation and responsibility among faculty, renders it less a *core course* that delivers uniform content. I anticipate continued haggling over the degree to which SUTD's core texts course should also be a core course. On the other hand, I expect continued consensus about the emphasis on critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Launching this revision at SUTD, we are certain to learn even more about what works and does not work in a core texts course with global content taught in Singapore.

A Conclusion

The experience of designing and implementing a new core texts course with global content in Singapore has been an education in itself.

Some of the challenges of the past three years would have been encountered anywhere in the English-speaking world. Job-driven curricula in academia and instantaneous global communication through digital networks will draw students everywhere away from the protracted effort needed to acquire strong language skills. Consequently, virtually all core texts courses have to accommodate a systemic under-preparedness of students. The lack of English translations of pre-1900 modern literature from outside the West will everywhere distort syllabi that seek to represent culturally diverse forms of modernity. Consequently, virtually all syllabi have to accommodate a systemic shortage of core texts that are both global and modern.

Other challenges met in Singapore are more particular to the place. A core texts course with global content for all first-year students at SUTD can succeed only insofar as Singaporean schools, during the twelve years in which students are placed in their hands, motivate greater acquisition of language skills. Given that Singapore administers the world's top education system in math and science, as measured by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2015), the widespread underdevelopment of language skills among the world's best students at math and science seems to result from a lack of will. If Asia in this century is to become the most dynamic part of the world and Singapore hopes to be its hub, then young Singaporeans would be well-served to become truly multicultural and truly bilingual, rather than merely multiracial, minimally proficient in English, and unable to communicate effectively in their mother tongues. Virtually all Singaporean students entering SUTD are ready to apply differential and integral calculus to a variety of complex problems, but only a few can develop a coherent line of thought into a well-structured paragraph with correct grammar and spelling. It seems that Singaporeans

believe genius can be achieved without much serious reading and writing. I would wager instead that genius blossoms in societies more supportive of critical thinking and the requisite language skills.

The challenge of finding local faculty to teach a core texts course at university level also seems to be particular to Singapore. Given the strong focus on math and science in Singapore's schools, no more than a minority of students are likely to be well prepared for, or even much inclined toward, undergraduate majors in the humanities. Of these only a fraction are likely to pursue such study at the graduate level. The small number of Singaporeans who complete doctoral studies in humanities disciplines at top universities around the world will have worked long and hard to acquire excellent critical thinking skills, for which reason they may be reluctant to return to a place where their accomplishment is grossly undervalued. As long as the small number of Singaporeans who hold Ph.D.s in humanities disciplines from top universities abroad are reluctant to return, the hiring of humanities faculty at local universities ends up, by default, skewed toward Westerners. This is more than a shame. A core texts course with global content needs accomplished faculty who are multicultural and multilingual to carry it out—just as Singapore needs a well-educated multicultural and multilingual work force in order to be a vibrant global center of economic and cultural activity. If Singapore is to become such a place, then Singaporeans must cultivate all types of talent that make such vibrancy possible.

It is extraordinarily difficult to counteract global trends that inhibit young people from acquiring language skills and fully developing their capacity for critical thinking. But not every inhibiting trend is global

in scale. Some are regional and even local. Perhaps institutions and communities can marginally roll back trends that operate on this smaller scale. It is worth trying. One of the ironies of the core texts course at SUTD is its popularity among students with excellent preparation in math and science, but relatively little preparation for reading, writing, and thinking about meaningful works of cultural significance. This goes to show that human beings, even those placed firmly on the math and science track in Singapore, are meaning-seeking creatures. SUTD students are quick to perceive that man does not live by the computation of things alone, but by interpretation of the meaning of things.

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再造傳統

——東海大學通識教育的新圖像

陳以愛 *

臺灣東海大學

一、前言：一所有傳統的大學

1955年創辦的東海大學，是臺灣第一所推行通才教育（general education，現譯通識教育）的學府。六十年前在中國基督教高等教育聯合董事會支持下，其創校理念是創建一所小型文理學院（liberal arts college）。學校創辦之初，具有高度理想性，反對專門教育、職業教育，認為全面的人格教育、文理均衡教育、勞作教育，才能培養出民主社會的「公民」（陳以愛，2014）。七十年代初以後，學校受到外在政治、社會經濟變遷的挑戰，漸漸遠離了創校理想，蛻變成為一所綜合性大學，與一般強調專門教育大學無異（東海大學校史編輯委員會，1981）。然而，創校理想從未離開過早期校友的視野。五十週年校慶之際，以「博雅教育」為口號，響徹校園地揭開教育革新的序幕，並創立了博雅書院。在這一波的革新浪潮下，通識教育也是重要

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環節之一。近年通識教育中心更成為推動改革的平台，透過全校通識課程的逐步革新，匯聚人文教師的集體認同，發動一場靜悄悄的校園革命。

本文在有限篇幅內，無法說明東海大學通識教育革新的方方面面，只能集中介紹下列幾個面向：通識課程的革新、課外活動的策劃，以稍事勾勒通識教育的新面貌。我希望不只交代「發生了甚麼事」？更願意說明這些事是「怎麼發生的」？去年一位教師來信表示：「我們正在寫歷史。」如果這句話有幾分真實性，那就讓我試圖描繪和解釋這些「歷史」創造出來的原委。可最為遺憾的是，我無法確切勾勒那些潛在而最為根本的因素，就是東海大學特有的人文傳統、校園氣氛。正是這些難以言述的氣氛，卻對這所大學起著最為巨大的作用，使得這些故事只能發生在東海而不是在別處。當然我們也深深明白到，若無個人或群體自覺不懈地努力，理想終究只是一個無法落實的幻影而已。

二、通識課程革新的歷程

（一）通識教學現場的反省：開設「經典閱讀」課程

細究起來，近年東海通識教育的革新，不是從教育理論的探討開始，而是從教學現場的反省開始。2003年，一位初登杏壇的教師開授一門中國近代文化與人物的課程，偶爾涉及文學經典作品，出乎意料地引起學生強烈反響。學生的反應，使這位教師開始懷疑資深教師的耳提面命：「通識課程是給學生常識教育，淺淺地教就好。」一學期尚未終了，這位教師認為自己犯了兩個錯誤：（1）低估了經典作品超越時間空間的價值。（2）低估了學生理解和體驗經典作品的意願和能力。接著，一門進階通識課程被規劃出來，內容強調的是更具深

度的閱讀、理解、思辨和寫作，同樣深受歡迎，成為一門口耳相傳的熱門課。幾年之後，這門課程被命名為：「經典閱讀：xxx」。起先部分教師擔心經典與學生距離遙遠，但學生的反響則適足以解除這份憂慮，並使教師們發現「教甚麼？」固然重要，「怎樣教？」或者更是主導教學成敗的關鍵因素。

從第一門課程的實驗過程，到一系列課程的開設，似乎是一個順理成章的演進。理由很簡單：如果一門經典閱讀課程大受歡迎，那為何不乾脆規劃出一系列來使更多學生受惠？具體困難卻是：課程師資到底從哪裏來？大學可以開出多少門這類課程？又有多少學生願意修習？在師資方面，東海通識中心不到十位專任教師，好在學校是綜合性大學，有文學院、社會科學院、法學院、創意藝術學院，這些專業院系教師是潛在師資。之後，經過一番審慎的個人性邀約，再轉變為相關單位之間的溝通協商，越來越多專業院系教師參與到經典閱讀課程的開授之列。兩三年下來，整個課程架構漸漸穩定下來。不過，寧缺毋濫，始終是一個基本原則。在不設定時間表的心情下，這一場通識課程改革呈現「有進有出」的狀態，在審慎把關中逐步推進。就系所參與度來說，中文、哲學、社會學三系，原本就比較重視經典閱讀，教師參與通識教育的比例最高。但是，其他系別也不乏樂意開授這種課程的老師，遂也興高采烈地加入教學行列。總體來看，廣義的人文教師對經典閱讀課程多半表示贊同，甚至相當熱烈地一起推動這場教育革新。通識中心發現自己成為連結乃至發揚東海人文精神的平台，通識課程則成為凝聚人文教師的場地。各系優秀教師參與開授通識課程，自也迅速改變了通識課程的形象，提升了校內聲望。而臺灣高等教育市場上流動的年輕博士，有一部分也被網羅成為本校通識教師。事實證明，他們不少人甚富教學熱誠，也具有相當學術涵養，對東海通識課程的品質提升貢獻匪淺。

（二）博雅書院核心課程：規劃「文明史」課程

東海通識教育醞釀課程革新的歷程中，2008年成立的博雅書院也在探索和建立自身的教育特色。博雅書院的經費來自校友捐款，一年錄取約一百二十位學生，提供特殊的課程及活動，以小班制為特色，重視「知識、實踐、態度」的融貫一氣。書院創辦伊始，通識中心有兩位教師協助籌備，隨後他們先後擔任通識中心主任。因此，某些教育理念在書院和中心之間流動，毋寧是相當正常的現象。其中，博雅書院的兩門核心課程：「東方文明」與「西方文明」，是書院教育長陳以愛的動議，經書院會議討論後確認，至今猶為書院核心課程。可是幾經人事變動之後，書院不再自行開設這兩門課程，改由通識教育中心規劃及開設，由書院採認為「書院核心課程」。於是，通識中心規劃的「文明史」系列課程，邀請中文系、美術系、社會系教師開設，以「小班討論」搭配「大班講授」，成為全校通識教育的厚實性課程。

當初通識中心課程委員會規劃文明史和經典閱讀課程時，並無把握到底有多少學生願意修習？講授經典是否曲高和寡，甚至引起反對聲浪？不料結果令人欣喜，看來至少有部分學生願意接受挑戰，嚐嚐閱讀經典的滋味。因為授課教師人數漸增，中心決定把「文明史與經典閱讀」彙整為一個獨立領域，在課程設計上做厚實化設計，每班人數上限為五十人，低於其他通識領域的人數上限。「文明與經典」領域架構如下：「榮譽小班課」，就重大課題進行理論和現實對話。「文明史」提供縱貫性圖像，強調建立整體性視野。「經典閱讀」提供重要文本，進行閱讀、討論和寫作訓練。2014年9月，這一新領域正式確立，每學期大約開設四十門課程，讓學生自由修習。

（三）「文明與經典領域」課程舉隅：以2014年度第1學期為例

2014年度第1學期，東海大學通識文明與經典領域課程

通識：美與簡	葉芳栢
通識：生命與死亡：生物學及哲學的觀點	胡承波　史偉民
通識：島嶼寫作	黃崇憲
通識：中國知識人的大學論	陳以愛
通識：日本知識人的大學論	陳永峰
通識：亞洲宗教：從文化視角看	Randall Nadeau
通識：猶太文明與反猶主義	鄧元尉
通識：西方思想與文明：工業革命至後現代	鄭志成
通識：亞洲藝術與文明：史前至中世	吳超然
通識：飲食與文明	邵美華
通識：技術與文明	王柏偉
經典閱讀：道德經	劉見成
經典閱讀：論語	馮以堅
經典閱讀：《論語》今讀	趙　剛
經典閱讀：孟子哲學	林久絡
經典閱讀：莊子	馮以堅
經典閱讀：史記	朱岐祥
經典閱讀：傳習錄	林久絡
經典閱讀：紅樓夢	洪銘水
經典閱讀：王國維、陳寅恪、錢鍾書	陳以愛
經典閱讀：徐復觀	蔡家和
經典閱讀：源氏物語	蕭幸君
經典閱讀：柄谷行人	廖欽彬
經典閱讀：舊約聖經	黃業強
經典閱讀：柏拉圖	俞懿嫻
經典閱讀：理想國	姜文斌
經典閱讀：莎士比亞	蔡奇璋
經典閱讀：盧梭：他的世界、他的浪漫	柯義龍
經典閱讀：亞當斯密	陳永峰　曾耀鋒
經典閱讀：托克維爾	陳永峰
經典閱讀：卡拉馬佐夫兄弟們	張一中
經典閱讀：尼采	嚴瑋泓
經典閱讀：佛洛伊德與卡夫卡	林峰燦
經典閱讀：布伯與赫舍爾	鄧元尉
經典閱讀：伊里亞斯《文明化過程》	張義東
經典閱讀：高達美論策蘭	蔡偉鼎
經典閱讀：高夫曼《污名》及《精神病院》	阮曉眉
經典閱讀：傅柯《性經驗史》	黃宏昭
經典閱讀：布希亞《消費社會》	林薰香

中心課程委員會未規定此一領域為全體學生必修，是基於幾點因素：（1）全校必修課程需要龐大成本支持。（2）強迫修課可能導致學生心理抵制。（3）部分教師對經典教育猶抱疑慮。故此，這一領域暫訂自由選修，以觀後效。

（四）課程改革的擴大：人文精神貫穿全部課程

必須加以說明的是，近年東海通識教育的課程革新，不限於文明與經典閱讀領域的成立。然而，這個新領域的規劃和擴大，起了火車頭的帶動性作用。通識中心生氣勃勃的討論課程革新，其面向延伸至全部通識課程的重新規劃。中心課程委員會漸漸趨近一個看法：人文教育的理想，是東海通識教育的核心精神。這樣的精神和關懷，應融貫進通識四大領域課程之中：「人文」、「社會」、「自然」、「文明與經典」，沒有任何領域可以自外。但理念如何成為現實？主要仍得倚賴教師的素養。一所學校擁有多少位人文教師，就能有多少人文教育的內涵。否則，一切流於口號。我們明白世事不可強求，願意與全體老師分享看法。任何一所學校都難以期待完美的課程，但若擁有一定比例的人文教師，認真的學生自會找到成長的契機。

三、師生跨系對話，讓人文蔚然成風

（一）角落習齋：人文生活的想像

近年東海的通識教育革新，已不止是課程面貌的變化，而更延伸至教室以外，發生跨系教師自由連結、跨系學生自主結合的新樣。一開始，許多活動的醞釀，發議於校園附近巷弄裏的咖啡館，繼而轉移到學校院落的「角落習齋」。時至今日，角落習齋成為東海人文生活

的代名詞，成為師生聚集聊天的場所，也是各式沙龍、座談會舉辦的地點。海外來訪的學人不少到此做過演講，對這個小空間也留下深刻印象。的確，角落習齋裏，師生或坐或站，或聆聽，或沉思，或激辯，或首肯的生動畫面，構成許多東海人大學生活的難忘回憶。

說明一下角落習齋的出現原委，或許也是不無意義的事。兩年前，通識中心所在的唐式院落一樓轉角處，有一處名為「角落習齋」的空間，因為某個計劃結束而經費無著。最後主事者決定，把空間交由文明與經典領域課程委員會規劃，但未能提供經費補助。七位課程委員來自不同院系，親至現場勘探之後，認為這裏適合作為自由聚談的場所。然而，空間的日常經營需要兩個條件：（1）需要建立一個學生社群，成為角落習齋的「掌門志工」。（2）需要舉辦定期活動，涵養師生對話的理想氣氛。七位委員推舉社會系鄭志成老師撰寫旨趣，闡述大家對人文生活的想像。鄭老師執筆的宣言，為後來的系列活動提出一個饒富意味的名詞：「人文三缺一」（閱讀、思考、寫作 + 對話），強調大學師生對於對話生活的渴求。[1]

鄭老師的宣言也強烈批判當前大學教育的績效主義，呼籲應當回歸人文生活的日常性。他認為人文生活應是日常生活，教師、學生、經典、對談，從容自在之步調，是大學生活中最為珍貴的核心價值。我們的經驗是：課堂容易流為一言堂，角落習齋的夜間聚談，是想恢復大學教育的本質。為了實現這一種人文生活，需要一個「不想被稱為活動的活動」維繫大家。接著，七位課程委員義不容辭地擔任各場沙龍講員，並在每學期終了聚首一堂，給「活動」來個熱鬧而溫暖的結束。因為七位老師都執教通識課程，各具獨特的人格魅力，慕名而

1　鄭志成老師的宣言，以及角落習齋的活動報導，可參考：人文三缺一（n.d.）。

來的學生不少，為角落習齋維持一定的人氣。兩年下來，人文三缺一風雨不改地定期舉行，幾乎每一場次都吸引相當人潮，儼然成為今天東海人文生活的象徵。

（二）別開生面的各式活動

人文三缺一的成功經驗，使性質相近的活動先後登場。人們發現角落習齋的狹小空間，有助拉近人與人的距離，特別適合小群體互動，在此醞釀和保存人際溫度。試列一下2015年春季活動表，可以說明通識沙龍的活力：隔週二中午是通識茶敘或講堂；週二晚上是神學沙龍，週三晚上是哲學讀書會，週四晚上是人文三缺一，週五晚上是宇宙沙龍。此外，還有不定期的課外講堂，邀請海外講者前來分享。如此算來，每月舉辦的通識知性講座或沙龍，平均約有二十場之多。這些活動對全校師生開放，更具跨系交流的特色。而且，角落習齋平時是作為學生自習空間，由「掌門志工」管理。「掌門志工」皆招募而來，成員來自不同科系，為了共同理想而聚集在此，成為活動的策劃者及參與者。這些學生的特色是普遍熱愛通識課程，傾向跨系所修課，不少人有雙主修或轉系紀錄，是校園中富有活力的學生社群。

當跨系教師社群和學生社群漸漸形成，展開活潑多樣的對話之後，很多活動自然而然地誕生。這種由下而上的特性，自是師生自主精神的展現，使活動跳脫「官辦」性質，得以避免各類制度規範。舉兩個例子說明：「吳德耀人文講座」是學校為紀念前校長推行通才教育的貢獻而設置，2012年第十一屆邀請林毓生教授蒞臨演講。當時，文明與經典領域三位課程委員隨即發起，由社會系和通識中心合開一門涉及自由主義的課程，讓學生熟悉林院士的講題內容，向前輩學者致敬。講座舉辦前一個月，七位課程委員又發起「知識人與大學」系列座談會，作為暖場之舉，把講座氣氛推向最高潮。2014年適逢吳前

校長逝世二十週年，文明與經典領域課程委員會又提議在暑假7月舉辦五天四夜「暑期通識營」，由高承恕教授擔任主講，另邀李猛和周保松兩位年輕教授帶領經典導讀，並配置四位年輕教師帶領小組討論。這種暑期通識營是一項創舉，匯聚來自各系的四十位學員，展開哲學、政治哲學、社會學等多面向交流，師生十分享受這次別開生面的學習方式。

（三）推廣通識理念，何妨鋪天蓋地

然而，本校通識教育面對的絕大考驗，乃在學校畢竟已是一萬七千人的規模，如何使人文之風吹拂全校？使師生都能認識及認同通識教育的價值？這個問題的答案是：校園氛圍的全面形塑，必須倚靠鋪天蓋地的宣傳，善用網路工具，尤其需要積極向新進老師和學生說明，務求通識教育的理念深植人心。2014年夏天，東海通識中心成立推廣工作室，招募學生擔任文案寫作及美術設計，擔負各種活動和課程的推廣工作。工作室成員對通識教育懷抱熱情，積極規劃各式各樣的宣傳活動：成立臉書（通識在東海網址：https://www.facebook.com/ge.inthu/timeline?ref=page_internal）、設計海報、發行電子報、特刊、撰寫學校頭條新聞等，適時介紹和報導最新活動。同時，通識中心和學務處、教務處教學資源中心也緊密合作，為新生大學入門活動舉辦「通識講堂」，為新進教師舉辦介紹通識的說明會。我們相信師生一進入學校，如果就能認識通識教育的意義，未來的校園生活必將更為豐富，更加富有人文氣息。

（四）展望未來

我們對未來有兩點展望：第一，在這個技術時代之中，人文教師在大學校園中的影響力，應更積極透過公共輿論的創造，來盡其帶

領、啟迪乃至警示的作用。新技術如臉書的運用，使公共輿論可以跨越教室和閉門會議而形成，這為大學師生預備了更為適切的對話平台。第二、在亞洲人口迅速老化的趨勢中，大學通識教育應不止是面向年輕人，還應考慮中老年的龐大人口。要如何鼓勵那些富有生命經驗的中老年人首度踏入或再次回到大學教室，聆聽哲學家的愛智之言，藝術家對情感昇華的吟唱，歷史學家對古今之變的感喟，是一件饒富意義的教育事業。

四、學生到底從通識課程學到甚麼？

到底要如何評量學生修習通識課程的成效？這一直是許多教育專家關心的議題。於是各式質性和量化問卷設計出來，為的是瞭解學生的實質收穫。在此摘錄2014年參加東海首辦「暑期通識營」的四十位學員報名資料及營後心得，作為考察東海通識教育革新成效的參考資料。這些學員多半修習較多通識課程，對通識教育持有正面看法。他們不足以代表全體東海學生，卻可以說明通識教育可以對學生帶來怎樣的影響。

（一）對通識課程革新的感受

社會工作學系四年級學生：「大學的前兩三年，我接受著專業的訓練，就像職業培訓所，知道自己在學些甚麼，卻不知道為甚麼要學習這些，這些似乎可以成為未來生活的技能，但對於人類文化的複雜、奧秘沒有更廣泛的瞭解，……直到大四，我深刻的感受著通識教育的變化，通識課不再是營養學分，與以往不同時有更多的要求，但這要求卻是吸引人的，因為這些要求是培養一個人成為更好的個體，而通識課對我的意義開始變化，是開始試著去解答自己對高等教育，

對生命中的種種疑惑，更進一步去培養自己思考、判斷的能力。」

「我認為我有兩個大學生活，……。通識課在我的印象中，也有兩個不同時期。一個是過去有很多課，但沒有甚麼可以吸引人，甚至處於大家挑營養學分修。另一個是近幾年通識教育的改革，越來越多經典閱讀課，讓大家慢慢脫離營養學分，認真看待通識課，甚至勝於系上專業課，我不知道其他人怎麼想，但我就是如此。」

社會學系三年級學生：「我覺得這一年多來學校的通識課程改善很多。在這一年多以來，通識教育中心所開授的課程內容，開始融入更多探討跨領域相關的知識，加上參與通識課程的老師，高比例願意貢獻教學熱忱，使得整體氛圍大大有助於學習品質。我認為，通識課程的設置，便是貴在當同學對於專業知識以外的課程有興趣時，能跳脫其他學系主必修課程的限制，從而能較無阻礙地依興趣學習。而這是『興趣學習』，絕不是『輕鬆與毫無負擔地學習』；一個毫不需耕耘便能坐享其成的知識，是無法體會箇中樂趣的。我認為通識課係可以富有深度的，而且是一種蘊含豐富思維下的深度。因此，我個人認為，通識課程於執行層面上的授課難度，往往是高於專業領域課程的；但這種開放各學系同學、各領域知識參與的課程，又正是通識之所以為『通識』之所在。」

（二）跨學科學習的收穫

行政管理暨政策學系三年級學生：「在我升大學之前從來沒有經驗過『美學』、『哲學』這些東西，他們對我來說都是如此地遙遠且陌生。但在三年前的暑假，我第一次跟哲學有了接觸，那時候我發現原來哲學並不是一門門檻很高的學科，但是其中的奧義卻是無限大的。這是我第一次走出固有領域所感受到的感動，從那時候開始我漸漸地開始注意過去我未曾注意過的學科，無論我是否有接觸過或者在其中

是否遭遇到挫折。……在我的大學生活中，我看到了與過去不同的世界，我涉獵的不單單只有系上所教的東西，我走進了物理的殿堂，踏進甲骨文的世界，走入亞當斯密的思緒，我看到了這個世界有很多人用著不同的角度再看他，進而更豐富我的大學生活。」

中文系四年級學生：「我修習過很多的通識課，……修通識課，到底能給我甚麼？我想，那就是，一，認識其他學科的語言、樣貌，進而瞭解。二，成為整全的知識，進而讓自己成為整全的人。三，建立某群人的集體性記憶，這可能是東海人或者是東海某群對知識有熱忱的人。我修通識課是開心的，因為通識給我很多東西。並且在個人體驗上，我讓自己走向未知的旅程，實際上就是冒險的旅程，而這是很能滿足我的好奇心的。所以我喜歡上通識課，而雖然自己要畢業了，但也很期待之後還會回來繼續旁聽其他通識課程。」

財務金融系三年級學生：「學科之間存在著壁壘，而且往往比你想像中的要高要大。我是明白這個道理，但每次我體驗到的，好像都超出我的設想。……很多時候，我們其實都只待在屬於自己專業的領域中，並且對當中的知識深信不疑，很少有機會能夠踏出來看一看外面的世界，所以在不同科系之間的隔閡才會那麼深。」「每次如果有人問我修過甚麼課，我總是打趣的說自己像個旅人一樣，從管理學院走過創藝學院，現在又踏進文學院。現在仔細想想，自己上過的通識課其實還真不少。……乍看之下，這些東西並沒有對我的生活起太大的作用，但在某次的談話中，我想起了哈姆雷特的名句，還有講到音樂與樂器時，我也能插得上幾句話。許多諸如此類的例子，我就知道這些課程似乎在我身上有了某種潛移默化的功用。我想起了之前讀過的一篇文章曾講到支援意識的重要，我們學了很多東西，而在我們每次碰觸不同領域時，曾經學過的，就會成為支援意識，我在想，這些通識課程對我來講是不是就是如此？」

生命科學系四年級學生：「我在四年級開始修與哲學相關的通識課之前，我的思想過程很多時候都是雜亂沒有條理或邏輯的，在開始認識一點哲學後，很多的哲學問題讓我驚訝，我才知道過去某些曾經閃過的飄忽想法，那些都是可以被討論與辯證的。我在修課的過程中嘗試著去學習哲學思維問題的方式，問題可以被解構成的不同層次，每個辭彙能夠代表的意義需要被清楚定義……等等，這些過程使我重拾學習的樂趣，並讓我在這年收穫良多，相較於以前自身的思考能力有所提升。」

社會學系二年級學生：「剛開始對於已不熟悉的生物課還有些不安，但聽到老師在科博館任職後就變得期待與興奮了。……這門生物課並不如擔心中的艱澀或無趣，反而就像小時候在科博館所體會到的探索世界的驚奇感。不過這些驚奇感在課堂中看過盧貝松執導的生態紀錄片——HOME——之後卻轉為了絕望。鏡頭下美麗的地球在人類足跡經過後都變得污穢醜陋，這比所有在社會知識中感到的焦慮不安，以及面對社會現況的徬徨無助，還要令人絕望。長時間關注於人文的世界，特別是我又從小生活在城市裏，很容易就以為人類是世界的全部，以及我們真的是萬能的，卻忘了是甚麼孕育我們的生命，忘了我們的命運與整個生態係緊密的交織在一起。韋伯說資本主義會延燒到燒光地球上的最後一噸煤，其實這也是以人類為中心的說法，世界末日本是我們自己選擇自己的命運，可是還有好多其他的生物在我們的末日來到前就已滅絕，承受著我們對於地球所犯下的種種罪惡。」

社會學系二年級學生：「最喜歡的是看到不同專業領域的老師們交鋒，雖然每每驗證了跨學科交流不是件容易的事，可卻是避免在自己熟悉的領域裏鑽牛角尖的最好方式。專業的學科分工長期下來難免僵化，每個系所都有各自的獨特氛圍，各自關注的核心問題，各自慣用的思考方式，甚至各自的語言。這些平時根本就不會注意到，但當

不同專業的人解讀同一文本時就會清楚浮現，發現彼此在乎的部分和思考的問題可能完全不同，並發覺可能原本找不到出路的困境，只要換個角度或思考框架就迎刃而解了。我想這也是通識教育之所以重要之處，只有不斷的交流才能讓眼界和心胸開闊，發現更多可能性。」

財務金融系三年級學生：「走出了自己的系，見到了不同的人，你才發現對待同一件事物，每一個人每一個系可能都會有不同的看法與見解，而甚至某些你認為天經地義的事情，在不同的想法下可能屆時面臨許多挑戰。這很讓我驚訝，原來自己原先所處的領域，也只是廣袤世界的一隅而已，直到這時候才知道大學的廣大，還有自己與單一科系的侷限，很是讓人訝異，但同時卻也讓人覺得有趣，在經歷對於同樣一個議題的意見交換與討論之後，自己的眼界與內心好像突然開闊了，雖然在這過程中間，有可能遇到一些小挫折，像是自己的意見無法被接受，或自己無法將概念表達得更好之類的，但我們也從中間的種種來學習，而在這種交流之中，我們也認識更多不同的觀點。我對此是感到有些興奮與期待的，這對我來講有點像是旅行者或者探險一樣，不過卻是在內心與思考中探索，會遇到甚麼你不知道，不過能肯定在這過程中間，你又進步了一點。」

（三）經典閱讀的體驗

企業管理學系一年級學生：「記得第一次上課，老師便開宗明義地說，這堂課中所選的文章，至少都讀三次。……第一次讀到一半我便闔書，舉雙手投降，隔幾天後又把它拿出來讀一次，突然很神奇地變得順了，也許是環境、也許是心情，種種不明因素的改變使得我對文章產生了變化，又或像拼圖拼出了邊框，再來就變得相對容易。這種讀書態度，是一種讀書方式，也是一種對於作者的尊重，現在對於自己本科或是自己所欣賞的文章，會要求自己達到閱讀三次的基準。」

生命科學系四年級學生：「這學期聽了些與哲學相關以及通識經典閱讀的課程，發覺能夠有機會一聽老師們講述這些經典文本，是件相當充實且滿足的過程，除了獲得了從來不曾聽聞過的思維與觀點之外，上課念書可以不只是念書而是一起讀書，透過老師的引導，在這些文本中可以看見自己閱讀時無法得知的背景與內容細節，經典當中重要的部分不只是文本的主題，還有更重要的是這些主題是如何被提出、被思考和經過甚麼樣的反覆辯證，然後成為我們所知道的經典。在學習的過程中，我得到了與我在修習我的專業科目時完全不同的學習樂趣，在學習閱讀這些經典的課堂上，一個個曾經閃過腦中的想法被文字具體化，有些粗糙的想法變成了真正可討論的並嚴謹的解構再分析，透過這些不斷的思考與延伸，使我自發的會想去知道更多相關的知識、試圖去瞭解更多我所不知道的部分……。」

社會工作學系四年級學生：「在研讀文本的過程當中，這些相當好的文字與意志重新燃起我對知識的渴望。最初，我僅因其良好而崇敬之；前人的語言及思想洗滌了我過去積累的諸多劣習，也引發我幾乎無所求、無目的的好學。接著，我逐漸明瞭他們以文字流傳思想的意志——儘管他們彼此間對人或社會的假設存有諸多差異，但都對人與文化保有高度的關懷。在與這些人數、聲勢皆難敵大眾的前人對話時，我也似參與了一小段任重道遠的文化工作，並受到這份意志的感召。關於我對各種生命活動的解答，我無非是想知道我為甚麼而活、應當如何活。文化或歷史沒有提供解答，而是有相對完整的問句，以及諸多前人的嘗試回答；它們都有能力使我們活得更好、更有意義，也使我能以較緩和的姿態來思考我所察覺到的問題。」

法律學系四年級學生：「沒有那樣被短視的現代人所輕視的經典，則人類不會有今日在知識上的成就，也因為人們漸漸將這樣的成就視為理所當然，所以人不再全面地思考，不再有整體觀、不再

有文化關懷，而我們終於看到今日世界虛無的面貌，以及感觸與思維能力麻木的現代人。我想，這也是通識教育的意義所在。我們追索過去，不是為了某種崇古的慾望，而是對於經典以及恆久的問題的重新關懷，和立基於當下的自省，如果缺乏這樣的自省與關懷，我們就是中空而浮動的軀殼，只為眼前的短期利益和慾望亢奮不休，最終也是陷入某種無法自外其身的循環，但在這樣講求實際效益與效用的現代社會，Think big只會被嘲笑為一種打高空唱高調的理想主義。不過，無論這些嘲笑如何浮濫地充斥於各個地方，面對我們這個時代的問題，舉凡人類精神、文化、意義的荒蕪與喪失，他們都將顯得蒼白無力。」「東海大學是我對於經典與思想重要的啟蒙地，……一本本書的累積，使我感到自己愈加的不足與淺薄，這使我更加謙卑地爬梳我所未知的西方經典與思想的理路，但我也歡悅於閱讀所帶來的知識上與精神上的成長，希望未來還能繼續在閱讀的道路上盡情奔馳，樂此不疲。」

（四）小班制的學習

社會工作學系四年級學生：「在東海修習通識課是辛苦的，但回頭來看總是收穫滿載，或可說是個再一次選擇的過程。……課堂裏，大量閱讀文本、每週的撰寫memo和小班制度導論課，是我以前幾乎沒有的經驗，他逼迫我每週去閱讀、去思考、去對話，也許對某些人來說會是容易的，但對一個以技術與職業導向的科系學生來說，筆動、翻閱書籍和找尋字裏行間，作者心靈、時代脈絡或意識形態的韻意，好比是再一次的重新讀起大學。」「記得當時加上老師，班上人數不超過十五人，課堂中或下課時，老師帶著我們散步、看看東海、逛逛書店，彼此間的談天與交換生活經驗。……在這裏，我學習的不僅是知識與學問，更是透過一名老師的典範，我知道應當如何

讀書、如何思考、如何對待事物與如何生活，如何成為自己生活中的主宰者。」

統計學系四年級學生：「在我的小小世界裏，這是一個前所未有的衝擊。看著大家在對話裏，不斷的思考、提問、反駁，不為了甚麼，就只是在尋求知識上的真理。坐在其中靜靜地觀察著，有一種無法言喻的感動，因為在場中的每一位都是像是一本本的書，記著各種故事，有的是百科全書，有的是某種專書，無法單從封面知道書裏藏著甚麼精采內容，可以試著從推薦序裏面瞭解，也可以從朋友的口中知道這本書的精采之處，但是，最好的方法就是，自己打開閱讀。大家聚在一起討論各種看法，磨合之中，找到自己滿意的想法，我也在一旁聆聽吸收，學習進入各種的脈絡中，找到真理，訓練自己在未來也可以如此侃侃而談，並非只是停留在字面上的研究。」

行政管理暨政策學系三年級學生：「同學們上完課程後，不懂的問題會先私下討論後再一起詢問老師，而且問老師的問題會越來越深入，即為熱切地想解決自己滿腦的困惑。這樣的學習具有傳染性，路過的同學也會停留下來一起聽，深怕自己錯過任何一個重要議題。在討論課程中，時常會碰出激烈的火花，每個人都很想表達自己的想法，除了表達想法之外，更想讓自己的想法被理解或認同，當有人提出異議的時候，有些人會導正自己的想法，有些人則會更再清楚地重述自己的觀點。……平時在系上的課程中從沒體驗過討論課，同學們在上課時也不太發言……。此外在系上也鮮少遇見下課後，老師身邊會被同學們包圍著詢問上課所產生的疑惑，我想這便是好奇心所造成的現象。」

（五）師生對話的渴望

社會工作學系四年級學生：「我特別體會到一種在學習當中的師

生關係：一個好的大學教師，他首先至少得要是一個不錯的知識人、讀書人。他可貴的，不是對台下展示出課堂範圍內的所有知識，或能解答課程範圍內的所有問題（倘若這是可能的）；而是為學生指引那通往偉大心靈的途徑。」

社會學系二年級學生：「真心喜歡目前在東海遇到的每位老師，可惜多半只能在課堂上聆聽老師講演，要在課堂外親近老師並不容易。雖然老師們都很友善，但也許是因為心裏的景仰而有了疏離感。漸漸的也認為大學裏的師生關係就是疏離、制式、僵化的，直到發現了角落習齋。小小的一方天地守著大學的本質，來到這裏的人們不為學分，不為文憑，沒有點名，沒有評鑑。僅僅是渴望知識，好奇書裏的世界，想與老師和同學們交流想法。很感動也很珍惜這樣親切的一群老師，全心的奉獻給知識和學生，不求實用目的，只憑理念和作為，因此很希望有機會能更深刻的領會教育的初衷。」

社會工作學系四年級學生：「我總覺得校園裏的人心很浮躁，……角落習齋的存在，……每週的人文三缺一都好像在改變這個校園的甚麼，比起過去，開始覺得人開始變得平靜，有一種我們心目中理想大學的樣貌出現，那種樣貌並非職業人才的培育所，而是培養知識人的地方。……我發現身邊的朋友不論甚麼科系竟然都開始讀起康德等經典，開始靜下來閱讀，開始對生活有另一種反省，我覺得這是一個種子，會慢慢開花。」「『人是永遠不能沒有孤獨的時刻，人需要以孤獨創造思想，以體認人生。但人之為人，人之成長需要靠頭腦與頭腦，心靈與心靈之相遇與對話。』我覺得這句話，是我在大學最後的體認……。」

哲學系四年級學生：「在大四開始接觸人文三缺一之後，慢慢的增加了自己在學校內接觸其他科系的老師和同學的機會。在這個過程中，我發現藉由與不同背景的人激發自己從新的角度切入舊思維，實在是一件很過癮的事。而且這學期（大四下）又多了一個神學沙龍，

其中請來了許多不同學校或校內不同學科的各個老師，到場提供自己對於特定文本所涉及的神學的、非神學的議題。而在加入在場來自各個不同科系有信仰的、無信仰的同學們、校友們，一起提問、討論之後，雖然不是每次都必然會有激烈而燦爛的火花發出，但也總是可以讓人感受到一股新的可能和新的氣氛正在校園醞釀之中。」

社會學研究所五年級學生（人文三缺一策劃人）：「對我而言，閱讀與思考是非常個人的事，畢竟理解與否只有自己最清明，然而，從我偶然進入書本世界的經驗中，在不同階段一直存在著許多的對話者，無論是學長/姊、同學，於是，讀書雖個人，思索卻往往觸發於對話與交流之中，在聆聽、理解、表述、捍衛申辯之間，而正式透過這些往返互動，我才能更清晰地意識自己的思考，觸碰自我的思維侷限。因此，我……希望能享受其中，享受那些在知識追求的過程中會發生的一切，享受衝突與岔路，以及更重要的，享受自身所堅持與立足之處。」

（六）通識教育的核心價值

行政管理暨政策學系四年級學生：「我認為通識的價值核心，……我們在大學會接觸到無可比擬的知識深海，每一個學科都是一個廣闊的宇宙，等著我們去探索。但是，有些偉大的事物、意識、或是概念會在這個探索的過程中被忽略，通識教育的目的是不要讓這些東西被遺忘。再者，這些問題從來不是一個科系的人就能回答的，他應該是所有的人都願意討論的主題，通識教育的目的，就是要重新讓大學開始討論那些被孤立的問題，如此這般，這些問題才有被回答的可能。」

哲學系四年級學生：「通識教育的核心關懷為何？我目前想到的是為了生活。生活的人有兩種區別，一是自己，另一是群體。前者是因為讀書的影響是直接作用在自己上，那麼最初人應該是為了甚麼而

讀書？以一種健康的心態而言，讀書是為了學習如何生活。至於，後者的原因是現在是處在學科分化、專業分工的時代，有甚麼是不同專業的學生需要共同學習的問題？那就是為了學習如何共同生活。不只是從經典中學習，當人們參與同一堂課時便在學習如何共同生活。最後，就讀書作為來說，越是花費時間在其之上，就越是影響生活。」「為甚麼要提倡通識教育，在此之前我認為通識教育是為了生活，分為個人層面與群體層面，個人層面是學習生活，群體層面是學習如何共同生活。在聽到李猛教授學思歷程中提到，通識教育是更基礎的教育，我以為是指所有各門專業都必須學的。於是提倡通識教育在道理上出現的力量，有著非如此不可的意義。」

社會工作學系四年級學生：「所謂通識，最初始不過是要試圖追求一種學科分化後的重新整併，也絕對不是現代各專業分工之下求合作之所謂科際整合。通識所要講求的通，是在描述這好些門學科最源頭的那思想大源；至於，無論是各學科或是其所使用的方法，皆是來自這大源的枝枝節節（無論或粗重或細微，甚至枝節不斷受斬斷而又間斷地復生的）。那麼，它所要求的條件，若以為學的方法或心態這種較實用的角度來說明之，該是如何呢？我至少不能肯定以那末端的方法來上溯之，無論其是先進、大行於市，又或便捷於取得些成果的所謂某種學術。因為，求學並非流轉於這些末段附近的枝節便可有所作為的；並且，儘管學問也寓居於最日常的事物中，但要接近那思想大源，為學者本身須裝備一些東西，才可能看出它或做出更多。若希冀它能平白、輕易地主動來到人面對，或突然地由人身上竄出，那便是種僭妄，彷彿可隨時就地另起爐灶一樣；又彷彿人最終可甚麼也不依賴地僭居創世、造物之位。」

最後再引用一位才剛畢業一年的政治系學生來函，他是在校最後一年才經歷通識教育的變化。2014年底這位同學給我的一封信上，侃

侃而談通識課程對他的作用，他這麼說：「重新審視通識課程帶給我的影響，我突然意識到時間才短短兩年，各方面的改變我內心非常明白；但才兩年的時間，我現在就想看成果似乎太早了。我希望以25歲當個起點，過個幾年35歲再回頭看這段過程的變化。」我認為這位校友點出通識教育的獨特性所在，此即這種教育將在更長的時段中才愈益顯出其效果。至於那些在學期間就認真修習通識課程的學生，已能清晰描繪自己的內在變化，我們自然可以期望在未來十年或更長的時段中，繼續見證他們的成長。[2]

五、結論

回顧人類的歷史，每一次教育革新的發起，都是一次對無活力心智狀態的反抗。通識教育的每一次復興，便都是一次心靈的復甦，希望再次整全地看待這個世界，再次幫助學生看待這個真實的世界。在高度專業化、功利化的時代裏，它無疑是逆流而上的旅程。逆水行舟，不進則退。歷史上任何一次教育革新，都必然以濃烈的理想主義精神作為驅動力。因此，一所大學是否鼓勵及存在理想主義精神？泰半決定了通識教育在這所大學中的地位。但在懷抱這種理想精神之後，如何深具現實感地解決各種困難？如何在特定的學校中，找尋和集結志同道合的人？如何找尋新方法、新工具？每一個大小細節都決定了每一場教育革新的成敗或樣貌。在這一個過程中，每一所大學都尋找自己獨特的路徑，沒有一套可以複製的版本。通識教育工作者深深明白到，教育革新是眾人共同譜寫的歷史，其間藉由無數杯咖啡下肚、無數通電郵往返、無數次會議討論協商，一日復一日地累積和轉化……。

2 清華大學陳舜芬教授曾訪問十六位早期東海大學校友，追蹤通才教育對學生帶來的長遠影響。請參考：陳舜芬（2000）。

對東海大學而言，已故練馬可教授（Professor Mark Thelin）留下的一句話，始終鼓舞他們以創造性態度面對大學教育的前景：「任何一所領導性的大學，都必須不斷置於革新和重建的過程，時時致力於把舊有中最好的與創新中最好的結合在一起，以達成教育的目的。」（練馬可，2013，頁66、70）。2015年是東海創校六十週年，通識教育在「毋忘初衷」的口號下，會一步一步地走下去。我們不敢或忘學校奠基者芳衛廉博士（Dr. William P. Fenn）在創校十週年時對全體師生的勉勵：「只有在東海能提供給學生的不只是表面的四年教育，我們所費的心思、勞力及灌注在它身上的愛，才能開花結果。」（芳衛廉，1995，頁59–61）

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通識課程「氣候・能量・生命」
——藉氣候談人性和道德

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一、前言

「氣候・能量・生命」是由香港中文大學地理與資源管理學系開設的大學通識課程，2010年開始每年秋季在香港中文大學講授，供全校學生選讀，至2015年開班共六次，學生數目通常超過一百，是甚受歡迎的課程。

大學是培養人才的地方，但是假如只顧智力的增長，而忽略道德教育，恐怕會放大畢業生破壞社會的能力，為禍比不讀大學的人更大。開設這個課程最基本的動機，是藉氣候話題去談人性和道德，希望學生因此動心做好人。

本文會介紹這個課程的構想和設計、主要內容及執行情況。

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二、課程的構想和設計

（一）願景與目標

這個課程的願景是令學生感應道德是完滿人生的構成部分，並在生活中加以體現。

這個課程的目標是令學生認識到道德是自然的規律，以及他們自己有份造成人類面對的艱難問題，促使他們以行動承擔對人類存亡的道德責任。

（二）課程設計

2012年起，香港中文大學本科生實行四年制，學生在第二至第四年必須修畢來自四個範疇的通識課程共15學分，四個範疇各修畢最少一個課程，詳情見大學通識教育部網頁（大學通識教育部，n.d.）。通識課程要求提供廣闊的學術視野，提高學生對人類生命的關注，培養學生的價值觀及判斷力，促進學生感應學科之間的聯繫，以及建立融合眾多學科之能力，同時又要求課程雖然標記為「通識」，但也必須有高的學術水平，不比本科課程容易。

本課程的源起是作者自2008年起，多次在香港浸會大學主持的短期課程「天地變何處安心」，講授內容後來編寫成書（林超英，2010）。「氣候．能量．生命」課程以原「天地變何處安心」為起點，根據以上要求加以擴充，內容跨學科，科學與人文並重，以廣闊的時空為背景，又提供充分素材去鍛鍊同學的思考，達到大學通識課程的目標。

「氣候．能量．生命」屬於「自然、科學與科技」範疇，課程計3學分，接近畢業所需學分的四十分之一。課程從氣候這個主軸展開，強調寬度而不是（「艱深」的）深度，學生透過觀察地球生命和冰河時代人類的演化，認識道德是自然生成的。修畢課程後，學生也當應

該有能力從廣闊的學術視野，審視全球氣候變化課題，建立自己對氣候變化（及其他全球環境課題）的看法，以及反思個人在改變地球氣候這件事情上所擔當的角色。

（三）課程概要

地球今天的大氣層，是氣候和生命共同演化的結果，由此連繫到生命的特性，尤其是生命個體和整體的維持。氣候是生命在地球分佈的背景，而冰河起伏則塑造了人性。最近的溫暖期造就了農牧，人類使用的能量大增，生活因而起了重大變化，衝擊著自然界的平衡。氣候又是歷史重大轉折點的背景。

工業革命造成大量能量消耗，是人為氣候變化的根本原因，其他下游影響有自我的消磨、人類與自然愈趨疏離等。課程展示二十一世紀氣候的最新推算和連鎖後果，討論應對危險氣候變化的思路，尤其是中國進入發展新時期的特殊處境，又會反思人類的核心價值觀念，以及怎樣在未來的低能耗世界加以發揮。

（四）講課單元

常規課堂講課共15單元：

（1） 融通：生命概念模式
（2） 氣候：遠古至今大氣成分的演化、Gaia
（3） 生命：物質與能量的流動、資訊、群性
（4） 流動：太陽能、食物網、生存之道
（5） 冰河：人類習性變遷、溝通、仁愛、孝
（6） 氣候：全球動植物分佈、各大洲人類的命運
（7） 溫暖：農牧出現、古文明契機
（8） 文明：工種多元、城鎮、瘟疫、系統
（9） 波動：農牧對峙、中國歷史進程

（10） 季風：航運路線、海洋帝國

（11） 燃燒：工業革命、城市化

（12） 巨變：人為氣候變化、大都會生活

（13） 危機：自然失衡、人類危機

（14） 中國：氣候變化的責任、地球極限

（15） 未來：二十一世紀氣候推算、應對的選擇

三、主要概念

（一）地球生命和氣候的共同演化

比地球靠近太陽的金星和離太陽較遠的火星，大氣層的二氧化碳含量都超過90%，地球的大氣層卻只有0.04%，十分奇怪。根本的原因是**地球有生命**，到處都有生物。圖1展示從遠古四十億年前至今地球表

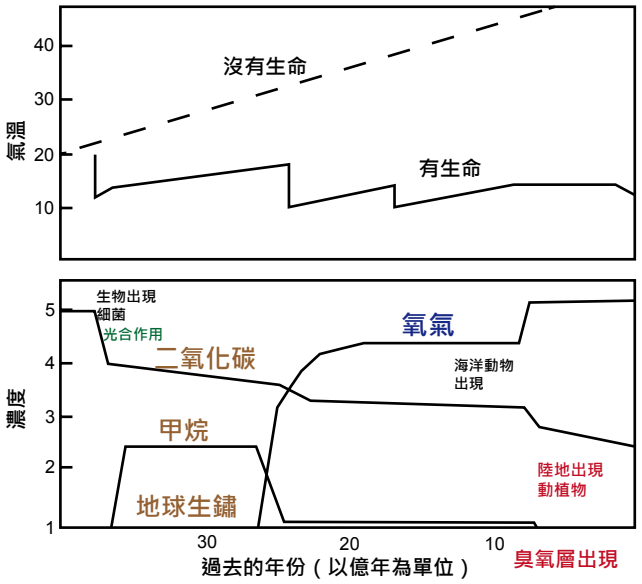

圖1 過去四十億年地球氣溫及大氣成分的演變

（背景圖：Lovelock, 1995）

面氣溫和二氧化碳含量的演化，左方是四十億年前，右方是現代。地球跟金星和火星一樣，四十億年前地球大氣也充滿二氧化碳，自從三十多億年前開始出現含有葉綠素的微小生物，藉光合作用把大氣的二氧化碳轉化成碳水化合物和排出氧氣，前者成為生物身體的物質，同時承載了來自太陽的能量，後者則令大氣的氧氣含量升高。

由於太陽是一個愈來愈熱的星體，生物必須想辦法保持地球的氣溫來保護自己，圖1顯示光合作用幫了大忙，減少了二氧化碳含量，溫室效應隨著降低，把本來要上升的氣溫拉回原來的水平，全球生物構成的總體生命不斷在自救；與此同時，大氣層的氧氣含量上升，終於臭氧層形成，阻擋傷害生物的紫外光入侵，於是生物大舉登陸，大氣層的演化反過來幫助生物開拓地盤，**氣候與生物共同演化**的概念於是建立（Schneider, 1997），**生命**是地球有異於兄弟行星的原因（Lovelock, 1995）。

（二）融通的生命概念模式

圖2是單隻動物的概念模式，可以說展示了生命個體的最基本內容，包括：邊界、自主、資訊、感應外界、體內聯繫、行動（覓食）、食物（能量和物質）、呼吸、排泄、損耗、修復等。

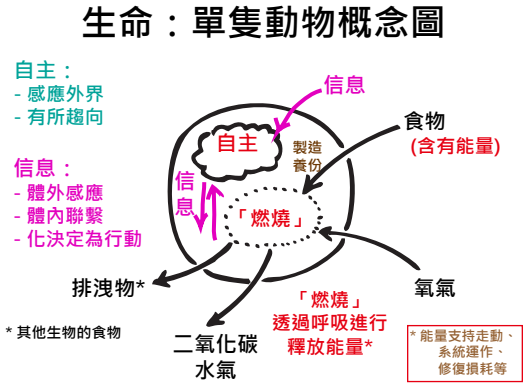

圖2 單隻動物概念圖

圖3是以同樣的框架套用在全球化現代城市之上得出的結果，城市概念上可以視為生命個體，有如八爪魚向遠方伸出無形的觸鬚吸盤，搜集遠處的能源、食物和工業產品，因此城市不可能視自己為獨立於全球的可持續生命體。城市內部的市民則呈現合作分工的狀態，個人相當於細胞，組成不同的器官，發揮不同但互相扶持的功能，沒有所謂誰比誰重要，任一器官損壞，整個城市便會衰敗下去。

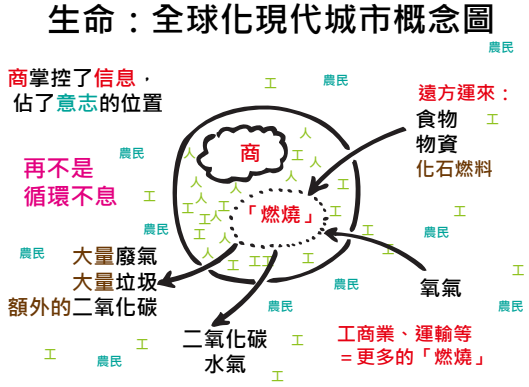

圖3 全球化現代城市概念圖

概念框架在課程裏還套用到其他對象，給學生統一的概念去觀察由細胞到全球一體（即“Gaia”）的多元生命現象（Lovelock, 1995）。本文兩個例子，給學生充分的想像空間，去思考城市的眾多話題，例如：個人在城市裏有否「絕對自由」、城市人對遠方人民的道德責任、城市內群體之間的合理資源分配、少數人控制了城市自主和掠奪資源的後果（腦癌？）等。通識課程強調跨學科、自然與人文交融，教師可以透過這套概念框架引導學生思考去體現。

（三）冰河與人性

約二至三百萬年前，地球進入冰河時代，開始出現冰河起伏，每

次冰河巔峰期，全球都轉乾旱，熱帶雨林範圍縮小，部分原本在樹上生活的靈長類如南猿，被迫轉移到地面生活，成為人類的先祖。他們必須適應新的微氣候、生態環境、食物、猛獸等，複雜的求生變成嚴厲的篩選，有效益的特質與習性得到強化，如：好奇、打獵、合作、分享和學習等。

與此同時腦袋變大，嬰兒出生成為瓶頸問題，經過無數犧牲，僥倖能夠延續下去的人類的嬰兒，腦部未完全發育便已出生，減少婦女難產的機會，不過嬰兒出生後卻需要長達十多年的照顧和教育，而且學習不限於知識，還有人際關係和團隊合作等。只有關係長期穩定的夫妻才會留有後裔，多番篩選之後，一夫一妻以及愛護子女成為人類社會的常態，即是「倫理」和「道德」，這是自然演化的結果（Morris, 1967; Wilson, 1978），而不是某些人誤以為的「迂腐」、「封建」和「法律規定」。

最新基因學研究顯示，散佈歐亞大陸和南北美洲的人類，全都源自十多萬年前離開東非為數不多的現代智人*Homo sapiens*（Oppenheimer, 2004），所到之處迅即取代以前先到的人類。這個時期小群體之間的地盤爭奪，成為新的篩選機制，勝敗不講個人體力，而講群體的知識總量和協同能力（Wilson, 2012）。

仁愛程度較高和孝道較顯的族群有較多的長者，他們通常知識較豐，也精於協調，因此這些族群在爭鬥中佔了優勢；經過無數爭鬥，孝道較低的族群被淘汰，於是人類之中孝道愈趨盛行，成為「倫理」和「道德」的組成部分。中國「百行以孝為先」的說法，有進化生物學的基礎，是自然演化的結果。以上這套論述以圖4綜合表達，有助學生重新認識「道德」。

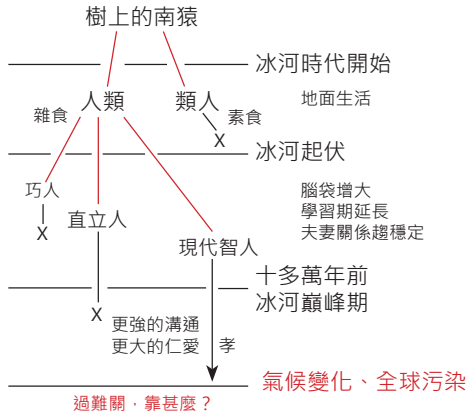

圖4 人類的苗裔通過犧牲、篩選、演化，得以穿越難關中的罅隙

人類演化過程中還有一個令人驚奇的現象，就是各種人類的腦容量都隨著歲月增加，獨是現代智人（即是我們）腦袋自十多萬年前開始縮小（見圖5）（Oppenheimer, 2004）。現代智人優勝在善於溝通，由於資訊大家共用，個人的腦袋稍小是沒有問題的，好處是能量消耗減少，食量可以降低，生存的機會隨之提高，有利族群繁衍。這個圖既反映溝通的可貴，也可以反過來印證溝通是現代智人能夠遍佈全球的原因。

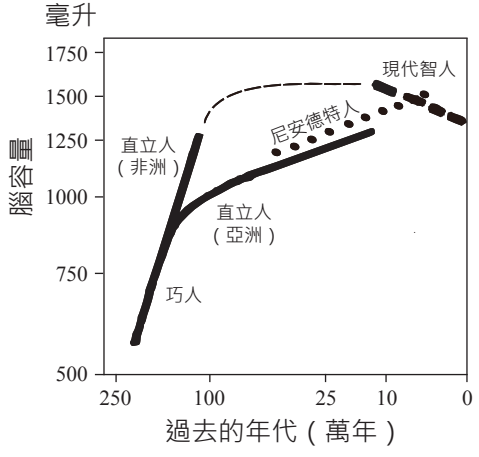

圖5 人類腦容量的演化——根據Oppenheimer（2004）簡化

（四）人為氣候變化和未來

圖6是過去一萬年大氣層二氧化碳含量轉變的曲線圖，標記了農業興起、工業革命、城市化、有關氣候變化的國際活動等，讓學生感應近二百年氣候變化的巨大、急遽，和人類影響的強度，以及醒覺自1976年世界氣象組織首次就氣候變化發表聲明，各國政府蹉跎了四十年而沒有解決的問題。

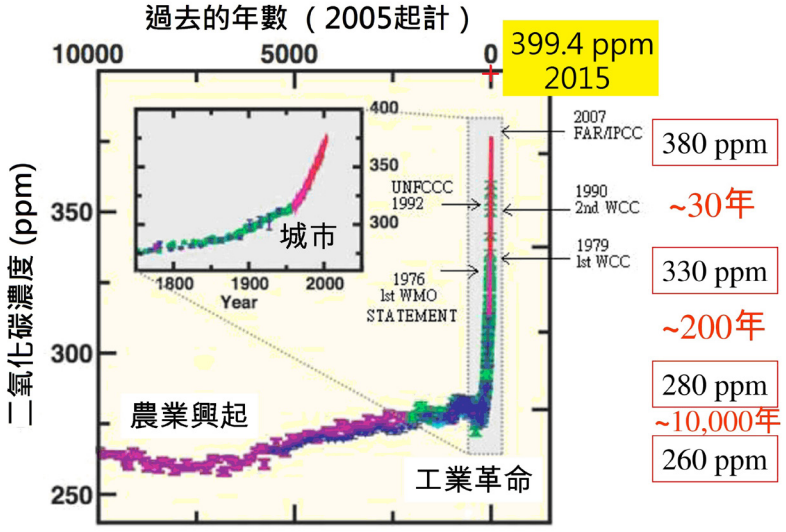

圖6　過去一萬年大氣層二氧化碳濃度的變化
1976年世界氣象組織首次發出氣候變化的提示，
其他箭嘴標示相關國際活動
（底圖來源：IPCC, 2007）

危機逼近，要推算二十一世紀氣候的前景，科學計算難度不大，不過人心難測，惟有設想幾個「情景」加以計算，包括：（a）強調「發展」（＝經濟增長）和使用化石燃料；（b）立即採用儉樸生活模式和不用化石燃料；（c）人類立即消失（供對比用）。根據聯合國政府間氣候變化專門委員會（Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,

IPCC）2013年的報告內容，消化後繪了文科同學也能明白的圖7，清楚顯示人類生活模式將會決定未來的氣溫。科學家的共識是，如果氣溫比工業革命初起時升高**超過兩度**，地球大氣將無法修復，人類恐怕難以活下去，到時甚麼「發展」再無意義。圖7可見，只有人類社會立即「突變」和選擇儉樸生活模式，才能在滅絕的懸崖邊緣煞車。圖很簡單，但是效果十分震撼，文科同學表示他們也能看懂。

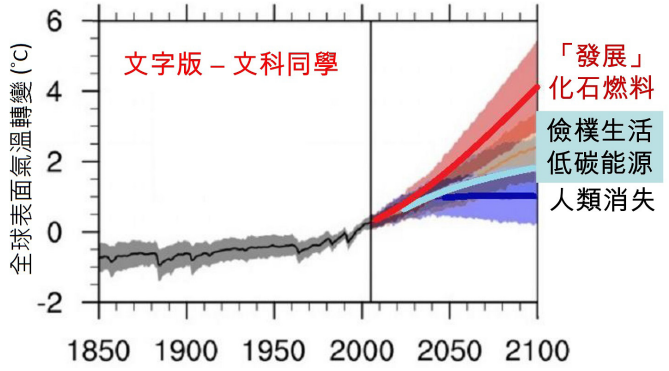

圖7　方便文科同學明白的二十一世紀地球表面氣溫推測
（底圖來源：IPCC, 2013）

直到半世紀前，全球的父母都對子女強調儉樸的可貴，視為傳統美德，可惜消費主義令人類誤入歧途，闖出危害人類生存的氣候變化這個大禍，而城市人過度消費是氣候變化的最根本原因，所以是城市人的道德課題。

四、教與學

（一）教學活動

15個單元的常規課堂集中在學期前部講授，每次上課連續三節，每節45分鐘，通常第一節的前半小時，由學生主動提出熱門新聞題

目，教師會引領學生互動討論，從中找尋新聞跟本課程的連繫，表面上看似不可能，但是因為課程內容廣泛滲透全社會，所以最終總能找到不少關連，令學生發現課程真的與日常生活息息相關。

由於學生來自多個專業，由神學到醫科，由理工到藝術，大家底子不同，上課時各有困難也各有領會，不少學生連光合作用都覺得深奧，教師惟有語言盡量淺白，又提供竅門幫助記憶，而且在課室內遊動，走到學生當中，隨時互動往來，發現學生有反應之處則即時切入多談，還要醒覺地提高聲調，七情上面，以熱情投入和間中的幽默促進學生保持專注力，教師自訂的目標是「做一隻強力的病毒」，感染學生。

（二）學習活動

除了上堂聽課，學生還要培養自學能力和參與團隊學習，前者以期終論文體現，後者要求學生5–6人一組，就指定題目（有十個選擇）共同製作展示檔，在學期後期的小組演講系列中輪流上場，把有關話題講得比教師上課具體和深化，這個過程讓學生親身體驗課堂中提到的溝通、合作和分工，既可教育他人，也可從聆聽中得益。聽演講的同學，可以通過講後的「微測驗」鞏固印象和得到小量分數。為了保障學生確實掌握有關知識，全個學期有三次測驗把關。

（三）學生反饋

每個學期終結時，大學安排學生問卷調查，給教師評分和反饋信息，「氣候・能量・生命」課程多次得到高於全校的平均評分。以下列出部分有代表性的評語和學生自己覺得學到的東西，反映學生對課程的看法：

(a) 上課：「沒有壓力，氣氛良好」，「師生互動良好」，「老師總能激起學生的反思和反省」，「時事與科目知識結合」，「每個課堂前能和老師探討每週熱門時事」

(b) 內容：「縱然此科偏向理科，但文科生仍不難掌握」，「從不同角度認識生命」，「科學結合人文，有啟蒙作用」，「學懂人生道理」

(c) 思考：「如夢初醒」，「學會事事質疑」，「批判思考」，「學懂反省自我」，「對環境與生命的反思」

(d) 視野：「認識大量有關世界的知識，開拓新觀點」，「用宏觀眼光看環保、大自然與人的關係」，「對環境有更大的關注」

五、結論

經過六年的實踐，證明「氣候．能量．生命」課程能夠以氣候為主軸，展開廣闊的時空探索，以實質的知識為基礎，為學生拓展視野，使他們感應多元學科的融通，思考生命與物質的互動、天人合一、自然道德、掌控能量的福與禍、人為氣候變化、人類的滅絕危機、自身的應對等。但願本文內容能鼓勵有心通識教育的人士作類似嘗試，為大學生的道德教育多闢一條入路。

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通識裏的價值教育：
以「中國文化要義」和「自由與命運」為例

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本文之作，緣於2013年10月31日筆者應香港中文大學鄭承峰通識教育研究中心之邀，為其定期舉辦之「通識午餐聚會」主講，題為「價值多元時代的價值教育：『中國文化要義』及『自由與命運』的教學經驗分享」。[1]該次聚會，筆者得以從「價值教育」的角度，回顧數年來在大學通識教育上之實踐，與會眾交流，受益匪淺。如今時隔兩年多，所思所想經過沉澱，筆者願以文字方式再加整理和深化，向《大學通識》讀者報告其理念與經驗。

本文主要分為兩部分（另有「結語」部分）。首先討論大學價值教育為何會成為現時代之一難題。此中關鍵，或在於我們正身處一個價值多元的時代，使我們不能亦不應再以「獨尊某家」的方式去開展價值教育。其次，在價值多元的既定處境下，大學裏的價值教育又可如何開展？筆者將以其在「中國文化要義」與「自由與命運」兩門大

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1 詳見香港中文大學鄭承峰通識教育研究中心網頁：https://www5.cuhk.edu.hk/oge/index.php/tc/zh-activities/zh-lunch-seminar/zh-2013-14

學通識課裏的教學經驗，提出一些建議。

一、價值教育何以成為難題？

這固然是個大問題，非本文篇幅所能處理。但恰好，中文大學哲學系榮休的石元康教授有一篇文章，適合這裏參考。該文題為〈現代社會中價值教育為甚麼會式微？〉（石元康，1998），其中第三節即談到大學教育：

> 在傳統的社會中，無論是中國或西方，經濟活動都被視為是一種附屬性的活動，它是達到人生的目的所必須從事的工作。……在現代社會中，這種情況幾乎完全被逆轉過來。經濟活動由手段變成了目的。……社會的這種價值觀當然會反應［映］到大學教育的形式及內容上去。由於人們主要的活動是經濟活動，大學教育的主要著重點當然也就會集中在與經濟活動有直接或間接關係的科目上。（頁155）

引文區別開「傳統社會」與「現代社會」，扼要道出古今之變。由於這種變化「會反應［映］到大學教育的形式及內容上去」，因此可進而說一種古今教育體制——「在價值教育佔主導地位的體制」及「現代社會中的大學教育體制」——的基本差異：

> 在價值教育佔主導地位的體制下，人們受教育的目的是為了學習怎樣做一個人。……中國傳統的教育就是一個典型的價值教育。在那個體制下，接受教育者主要的動機及目的是希望能學

> 到怎麼樣做一個人，怎麼樣培養自己的品格，以及怎麼樣建立起一個人生觀，從而能夠有一個美好的人生。但是在現代社會中的大學教育體制下，接受教育者的動機及目的最主要是學一套謀生的技能。這是與經濟活動有關的，［、］而與怎麼樣建立一個有系統的人生觀完全不同的教育。如果問一個大學生他為甚麼要唸大學，我們很難想像他的答案會是「追求人生的道理」。他最多只會說，為了追求知識，但是如果你再問他你所追求的知識是作甚麼用的時，他只能告訴你是為了將來謀生用的了。這是典型的技術教育。（石元康，1998，頁157）

當然，這還只是現象的描述。作者接着想要探討的，便是這種現象的成因：

> 我所要探討的問題是：為甚麼技術教育會在現代社會中佔了這樣主導及壟斷的地位？為甚麼價值教育幾乎完全從大學中被排除出去？我想從兩個觀點來對這些問題提出答案。第一個是現代人由於具有了一種特別的知識觀，因而價值體系及觀念被視為不是知識，所以也就不應該被編排入課程中。第二是由於現代人對於價值的基礎有一種特別的看法，這個看法就是主觀主義。由於知識應該具備客觀性，因此，學校教育中也就不應該把價值的教育編排進課程中。（石元康，1998，頁157–158）

至此即可回到本節的問題上：價值教育何以成為難題？作者提出兩點因由，第一是現代人對知識本身的特殊看法，第二是價值的主觀

主義。篇幅所限，筆者以下想着眼於第二點。[2]

所謂「價值的主觀主義」，石先生這樣解釋：

> 價值的主觀主義這種理論認為，價值不是由理性所引發出來的東西，它只是人們任意決定的結果。個人有自己的喜好，有的人喜歡古典音樂，有的人則喜歡搖滾樂，這完全只是個人的喜好而已，沒有任何客觀的標準可以評定兩者的高下。理性在這裡不能提供任何標準給我們作為具有客觀性的判斷根據。（石元康，1998，頁164）

「價值的主觀主義」作為現代生活的普遍前設，認為價值是一種訴諸個人好惡的取態，不必有理由可言。試想，基於這種預認，我們還能如何談論一個美好的人生？例如我們能否說婚姻生活比獨身生活為好？一個有着固定職業的安定生活，就一定比一個揹着背包遊歷四方的人生為好？又試將目光放在大學教育上，我們還能否像古代一樣，奉「四書五經」為人類智慧的最高經典，是人類價值的終極依託，

2 但為方便有興趣的讀者跟進，這裏試略為交代石先生所提出的第一點因由——現代人對「怎樣才能算作知識」採取了一種異於「前現代人」的特殊看法。所謂「現代人對知識本身的特殊看法」，其特殊之處（即其與前現代的知識觀不同之處），用石先生的話來說，即「現代人的知識觀就是只把技術性的知識視為知識而不承認有實踐性的知識這種東西。」（石元康，1998，頁161）而正因價值教育並非以傳授技術性知識為本務，因此自然被排除在現代大學課程之外。至於說現代人這種特殊的知識觀是如何形成，石先生則說：「現代人之所以會有這樣的知識觀，主要的原因是由於他們對於確定性（certainty）的追求。……他們認為，只有能提供確定性的東西才構成知識。同時他們有一個信念，認為任何學科都可能提供同等的確定性。如果有些學科尚未達到確定性的話，它所表示的只是它沒有採用正確的方法。只要採用正確的方法，它也同樣可以達到別的學科所具有的確定性。這種想法最具代表性的思想家當然是培根（F. Bacon）及笛卡爾（R. Descartes）。」（石元康，1998，頁161–162）

從而要求學生着力經營人倫生活，做一個儒家式的君子；如果他想離群索居、出家求道，則我們必得反對？

在上述那種對價值的現代認識之下，「價值多元」早已成為我們所不能拒絕的、既予的處境。甚至，我們根本不是無奈地接受價值多元，反而是正面地、積極地要求、爭取和捍衛一種價值多元的群體生活。價值是否主觀姑置不論，但價值多元則已然成為一個普遍接受的境況——如果今天有人想再搞一次「罷黜百家」，相信大部分人包括筆者都會反對。這樣，當前的大學又怎能再以一種權威的方式，向學生灌輸、頒令一些價值？

假定價值教育仍有必要，則在當前的時代裏，我們既不能以權威方式頒布某種「定為一尊」的價值，那麼價值教育又可以甚麼方式展開？以下是筆者在兩門大學通識課中的嘗試。

二、通識裏的價值教育：兩個例子

筆者自2009年起，在香港中文大學任教過的大學通識課計有六種。這裏特別以「中國文化要義」和「自由與命運」兩門課為例，除因為任教次數最多、經驗較為豐富之外，亦由於這兩門課恰為兩種典型：「中國文化要義」主要介紹單一文化傳統及其價值觀，「自由與命運」則講述多種人生觀、價值觀（原則上，古今中外關於自由與命運的思考都可涵蓋其中）。在這兩類典型之下，價值教育有不同的設計。

先說「中國文化要義」。任教這門課時，筆者都會於第一堂提醒同學：我們毋須認為中國文化一定比其他文化優越。中國文化課在我們大學之所以為必修，並不由於中國文化特別高級。原則上，任何文化傳統都值得我們去認識，只是由於中國文化跟我們比較接近——中

國文化在一般香港人的價值意識組成裏佔有相當比重，故出於自我了解之故，次序上我們首先認識中國文化，僅此而已。[3]

上述理念非筆者發明，乃根據已故勞思光先生「在世界中的中國」（China in the World）一主張而來。[4]就筆者理解，「在世界中的中國」之要義當為：

> 專就人類文化的遠景看，多元主義的文化觀仍是有助於文化發展及豐富化的。一個文化傳統只要有其正面的特色，在長遠的發展觀點下，便都值得保存——雖然不必是原封不動地保存。人類歷史變幻無定，所遭遇的問題也往往不能預見；而人類憑以應付客觀問題的資本，只是文化成績而已。因此，在長期觀點下，各種文化成績的保存，即是我們克服歷史難題的能力的源泉所在，有遠見的思想者，必定明白毀棄文化成績，基本上對人類來說是一種損失。我們縱使離開中國人的民族感情來說話，我們仍有理由相信，我們應該保存中國文化的成果，以供人類採用。（勞思光，2000，頁55）

任何一個文化傳統，都是全人類的共同寶藏，是人類藉以應付和解決

3 為說明這一點，筆者通常會問同學：「中秋節象徵甚麼？」同學都回答：「團圓。」筆者再問：「為甚麼中秋節象徵團圓？」同學答：「因為月圓。」筆者繼而指出：「我們會從『月圓』想到『團圓』，但不會聯想到『人狼』——如果月圓之夜有人狼出沒，中秋節就不應出外賞月，以免遇上生命危險。我們慣常地聯想到『團圓』而非『人狼』，這是由於傳統中國文化在我們意識裏的沉澱，可見中國文化對我們影響之深。這並不表示一定好或一定壞，但既然我們意識裏有着為數不少的中國文化因子，則認識中國文化，顯然有助認識你自己。」

4 勞思光：「就我自己的思想演進來說，自一九五零年前後，我已漸漸明白，中國文化危機的出路，與世界文化的新取向息息相關。世界文化秩序如無重建的希望，則中國決不能獨自建立文化秩序，與世界絕緣。這一點認識使我後來提出『在世界中的中國』（"China in the world"）的口號，作為研究中國文化問題的基本觀念。」（勞思光，2007，頁221）。

隨着歷史演變而層出不窮的問題的共同資本。因此今天我們講中國文化，為的並非爭強競勝，證明這套文化比其他文化優越（這恰是一種against the world的態度），而是擺在世界的背景來看，着眼於全人類的共同問題，這才是in the world的態度。文化成績是供人類採用以解決客觀問題的資本，資本多一分，人類得以解決種種未知的問題的把握就多一分，故此任何一個文化傳統都值得保存（中國文化自不例外），以增益人類解決問題的籌碼。這是一種實事求是、着眼於如何應付世界文化問題的態度，是一種立根於全人類的觀點，並不要求我們持有一種特別的民族感情。簡言之，「在世界中的中國」就是在「多元主義的文化觀」下，視中國文化為「平等的眾多之一」：她不一定最為優越，但依然值得珍視；反過來說，值得珍視，卻毋須強說為最好。

由此可見，在「中國文化要義」這類介紹單一文化傳統的課程裏，我們的教學也可本着一種「多元主義的文化觀」。但具體來說，這種「多元」的理念，又可如何落實於一門中國文化課的課程設計上？

這裏，筆者最主要的參考對象是余英時先生。他在〈從價值系統看中國文化的現代意義〉一文中提出一種主張，即「通過一組具有普遍性、客觀性的問題來掌握中國文化的價值系統」（余英時，2007，頁15）。此一主張所透露的想法是：任何一套文化，深層裏都蘊藏着對一組普遍而客觀的問題的回答，這些答案環環相扣、互相支持，從而融貫成一套「價值系統」。通過此一「價值系統」，則能較為可靠地（非武斷地）理解一套文化之特性（所謂「中國文化要義」之「要義」，就在這裏）。再者，既然這組問題是普遍的，即適用於任何文化，則它們自可作為不同文化之間比較和對話的平台。例如說，「如何看待生死」一問題，不同文化都會關心：死亡是否值得懼怕？人既必有一死，則數十年的生存是為了甚麼？不同文化對此一普遍的問題

各自提出特殊的答案。至於這組問題之具體構成，余先生文中則提出四種：（1）人和天地萬物的關係，（2）人和人的關係，（3）人對於自我的態度，（4）對生死的看法。此一設定已然相當週到，但筆者於實際教學時仍會有自己的調整，例如增加「如何面對外在境遇」一問題等。總之，具體問題大可繼續羅列（只要是「普遍而客觀」），重要的是這套「問題框架」的方法本身。

運用這種方法，我們除可深入地向同學介紹中國文化之特性外，更可開闢或拓闊他們的多元文化視野：中國文化無論有多精彩，都只不過是一套特定的答案，而答案尚有很多種。對於「自我」、「生死」等問題，如果你想建立一套屬於自己的、足夠成熟的價值觀，則你應該多參考不同文化的特定答案。儘管一門中國文化課，無可避免地要將課堂時間最大量地用在中國文化上，對其他文化之涉及必然極為有限。但至少，這樣設計的中國文化課，可以在同學心裏播下種子，在他們日後到外地交流、旅遊、工作，甚至生活時，帶着這套問題框架，去扣問、探索當地文化，力圖在多元視野下，組建一套最適合自己的價值觀。

總的來說，這樣設計的「中國文化要義」，由於主要探討「中國文化如何思考人生意義、死亡、人在天地中的地位」等價值問題，自然會涉及價值教育——協助同學建立其價值觀並提供中國文化的思考角度。但在「普遍的問題，特定的答案」之認定下，這種價值教育又能相應於價值多元的時代，並不把中國文化視作權威。

現在再來看「自由與命運」——一門必然涉及多種人生觀、價值觀的課程，與上述「中國文化要義」不同。限於篇幅，且撇開「自由」這個課題不論，專談「命運」。這門課至少有一半課時談及各種應對命運的取態，例如尼采（Nietzsche）、存在主義者卡繆（Camus）、道家的莊子、儒家的孔子與孟子、佛教、基督宗教等，可見這門課先

天地已經足夠多元。在如此便利下，教師所要做的相對簡單，就是盡力鼓勵同學就不同取態之間進行比較切磋。筆者通常會將總成績百分之十撥做「課堂討論」分數作為誘因。經驗所得，同學的討論往往非常熱烈（這門通識課的討論，有時甚至比筆者任教的哲學系主修課更精彩），一個主要原因，是課程所介紹的那些命運之思本來就引人入勝：莊子「知其不可奈何而安之若命」的灑脫與孟子「莫非命也，順受其正」的剛健之間，以至尼采在「上帝已死」之後不再依靠任何外在權威，純粹以超人的意志力和激情去「愛命運」，與《舊約聖經．約伯記》所提倡的謙卑之間，本身就足夠吸引我們去作比對和反思。於是，喜歡莊子的與贊成孟子的、支持尼采的與認同基督宗教的，互相切磋，好不熱鬧。這種先天的便利，保證了同學能在課程裏認識和檢視不同的人生觀、價值觀，在價值多元的基礎上進行價值探索。

然而，筆者認為更重要的，是讓同學在這種「多元切磋」之上進行「自我詰問」：你可以喜歡莊子，但你怎知莊子一定是對？面對眾多命運之思——孟子的、尼采的、基督宗教的，你能否替莊子回應他們，並說服你自己，莊子的思考較為高明？在價值多元的時代，我們傾向不相信有最正確的價值觀。但通過面對質詢、給予回應，我們可以有更穩妥的價值信念。我們不必屈己從人（但當然，倘若你認識孟子之後，理性地決定放棄莊子，那也無妨，重要的是說服自己），假設一個基督徒，在面對尼采的挑戰之後，依然決定堅持自己的信仰，也無不可，重要的是通過這種「他者的質詢和自我的反思」之後，你對自己所相信的會有更豐富的認識、更透徹的了解。比關起門來彼此各行其是，境界不可同日而語。

筆者曾發表一篇文章：〈「我們贊成謙卑嗎？」——儒家面對基督宗教時的應有反思〉（吳啟超，2010），現把該文的「內容摘要」引錄於下，作為上述「自我詰問」一原則之展示：

本文是一位以儒家價值作自我期許的人，在面對基督宗教跟儒家的差異時，所作的自我質詢和檢討。健康的宗教對話，應從「正視對方信仰背後的合理用心和關懷」開始，進而自我反問：建基在此合理關懷上的信念，在我們的價值系統中能否融貫地被承認？在此意義下，本文可視為這種「宗教對話觀」的一次實踐。

自孔子提出「我欲仁，斯仁至矣」以來，儒家即秉持著一種自信的基調：吾人具備完成自我的充足力量，不假外求。對照之下，基督宗教則強調人生得以圓滿的關鍵在上帝的恩典，故人應向上帝表示謙卑。從儒家的角度出發，本文首先要問：基督宗教強調謙卑，背後有何關切？其次，倘若對方的關切實屬有理，則儒家的教義又能否贊成謙卑？謙卑與自信又能否兼容？若然，則「自信與謙卑兼容」的儒家教義又能否回應對方的憂慮和警惕？

這些問題所透露的，是一種重新認識自己的意圖。通過這種自我反思，儒家將更能了解並欣賞自身和對方的教義。本文希望，憑著見賢思齊的氣量，我們能探索出宗教相處的通情達理之道。（吳啟超，2010，頁41）

總結本節，筆者以「中國文化要義」和「自由與命運」兩門通識課為例，說明在價值多元的時代，我們可如何開展價值教育。在「中國文化要義」這類主要介紹單一文化傳統及其價值觀的課程裏，我們本乎「在世界中的中國」的理念（或一般化地說：「在世界中」的理念），以「問題框架」為課程骨幹，通過一組普遍的問題，觀察中國文化所給出的特定答案，以此引導同學了解：中國文化是多元中的一元，為着建立更成熟和完備的價值觀，我們當在此課程之上，繼續認

識其他文化的特定答案。在「自由與命運」這類講述多種人生觀、價值觀的課程裏，我們以「多元切磋，自我詰問」為原則，要求同學在認識不同價值觀之後，促使彼此互相質詢，更要讓自己所相信的、認同的價值觀接受挑戰，務求為自己確立一套更穩妥、更能說服自己的信念。

三、結語：價值教育，所為何事？

筆者在本文第一節末段曾說：「假定價值教育仍有必要，則在當前的時代裏，我們既不能以權威方式頒布某種『定為一尊』的價值，那麼價值教育又可以甚麼方式展開？」換言之，緊接着的整個第二節的討論，其實只本乎一項假定：假定價值教育仍有必要。在此結語部分，我們不妨簡單討論一下，價值教育，至少在大學裏，是否真有必要？

既然價值多元，眾多價值觀之間難以評判優劣，那麼最自然的結果就是：鼓勵尊重和包容，別問誰優誰劣。如果大學還要開展價值教育的話，則我們似乎只需倡導一種價值：尊重與包容。

無疑，尊重和包容的確是我們今天所應重視的態度和品格。不過，僅僅鼓勵尊重包容，是否就能滿足價值教育的要求？須知道，包容必涉及標準：應該包容甚麼、不應該包容甚麼。世上有些事情，我們明顯認為不可容許，例如種族屠殺、活人獻祭、童工、雛妓等。但另有好一些事情，究竟應否包容，卻沒有眾口一致的答案。倘若這些事情僅僅關乎私人生活，則情況尚不複雜。但若然關乎到公共生活，則我們便不能不一同認真思考，包括反思我們包容事情的標準，以及劃定包容的合理範圍。簡言之，應該包容甚麼、不應該包容甚麼，其實就是一套是非標準。

今天，是非標準固然是多元的。但若然我們因為價值多元、因為「是非」不能定於一尊，為了省事（避開漫長而難以達至共識的爭論）就乾脆不去思考公共生活中的是非問題，又會造成甚麼樣的後果呢？這裏，美國哈佛大學教授桑德爾（Michael J. Sandel）新近的 *What money can't buy* 一書，可謂發人深省（Sandel, 2013）。書中提出一種觀察，就是我們在還沒有審慎考慮之前，便已然從「擁有一個市場經濟制度」（having a market economy）轉移到「成為一個市場社會」（being a market society）（Sandel, 2013, p. 10），表示我們現時的生活裏，有很多事情（包括原先不由市場所決定者）都已交給市場來決定而被冠以「價格」（price）。書中舉出非常多而有趣的真實例子，促使讀者了解一種情況：對生活中的美好事物冠以價格，可能會使它們敗壞（corrupt）。「價格」固然是一種實用的手段，例如說兒童托管中心為了迫使家長準時接回兒童，於是對遲到家長徵收罰款。然而結果卻是：家長們將罰款看作費用，付費之後，他們就有權遲到，托管中心亦有責任多看顧其子女一段時間。這樣，我們還會否關心托管中心員工準時下班的權利？我們對托管中心老師們的尊重又會否敗壞了？通過一連串的事例，桑德爾想帶出一個訊息：我們別因為價值問題很麻煩，就把它擱置起來，然後將公共生活的規範交給「看似價值中立」的市場（價格）來決定；事實上，市場不是中立的，它們會留下其印記（markets leave their mark）（Sandel, 2013, pp. 9, 201）。就是說，如果我們害怕將是非價值問題帶入公共領域去討論，並不會使這些問題懸而未決，因為市場會在不知不覺間為我們做出決定。[5]

本文並非要討論「市場化」對公共生活所帶來的問題，但桑德爾的警惕至少部分地仍對我們適用：是非問題縱然麻煩，卻不應把它們

5 "For fear of disagreement, we hesitate to bring our moral and spiritual convictions into the public square. But shrinking from these questions does not leave them undecided. It simply means that markets will decide them for us." (Sandel, 2013, p. 202)

置之不理，否則總有某些力量（或許是市場，或許是某種威權）為我們做決定。尤其對大學而言，如果大學以培養具有是非意識而能獨立思考的社會成員為己任，則斷然不可在價值教育上缺席，或僅僅以倡導一種「空洞的包容」（把是非問題擱置起來）來充數。因此筆者主張，與其從價值教育中退場，或退守到「空洞的包容」裏，我們倒不如認真構思一種適用於價值多元時代的價值教育模式。誠然，今天我們似乎已找不到最正確的價值觀，但透過對話、切磋、反思，我們可以得到更穩妥、更能說服自己的價值信念。價值探索雖然永無止境，但我們永可進步。

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Teaching American Law in China

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Toward the end of my first semester as a high school teacher in China, the headmaster called me into his office to talk about what courses I would offer in the spring. By that time I had become somewhat less bewildered than I was at the beginning of the year. I now had a calmer and more educated appreciation for the creative uncertainty going on around me. When my husband Grant Franks and I had accepted positions at a school in Beijing I had thought that we would be entering a well-established program. Instead, we found ourselves in the midst of China's experiment in improving its educational approaches. Dalton Academy, where we worked, was an experimental section of the Affiliated High School of Peking University. Dalton had been founded to respond to a directive from the Central Committee to provide "general education." No one was sure what that meant, and all over China educators were trying out different ideas.

The experimental focus of Dalton Academy was on students taking responsibility for their own education. We teachers had a great deal of

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freedom in what we would offer to teach, and students chose what they wanted to learn. In the first semester, when I had asked the headmaster what courses he wanted me to offer he answered with a question: "What is your favorite book?" "Well," I replied, taken by surprise, "I suppose my favorite book is *Moby Dick*." "Teach that," he said. So I did.

In the second semester, forewarned of my freedom, I had given the matter more thought. Our general job was to teach humanities in English to Chinese students who were intending to get their higher education in the United States. Where, I wondered, is the crossroads between what would be most useful and interesting to these students, and what I could best offer?

I decided to take advantage of the fact that my primary career has not been teaching, but lawyering. For more than twenty-five years, I have practiced water law in New Mexico, an arid state in the American Southwest. Issues about what law could and should do had been a big part of my life. Should water, a resource essential to life, be privately owned and subject to market forces? Even in capitalist America most state governments say "no." How would my students think about such property questions in a communist China that was adopting a market economy? What did these kids believe about politics and law? They seemed very familiar with Western pop culture, but I did not know what they thought about other issues, such as human rights, property and the competing values of communal responsibility and individual initiative. So I offered a course in American Law.

Eight students signed up for the class. Neither they nor I were sure what to expect. If nothing else, they would deepen their knowledge of English,

and get used to reading, talking and writing in English; good practice for second language learners. In addition, my experience teaching at St. John's College, which is a school devoted to conversation about great books, had persuaded me that reading, talking and writing are the best way to approach education in general.[1] For my students, the experience of grappling with the issues presented in the law would serve as practice for formulating and thinking through complex matters of any sort.

A memorandum distributed to all our students in their Humanities classes stressed the importance of reading, talking and writing. We included within it a quotation that reflects the St. John's approach to education, from Sir Francis Bacon:

> Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.[2]

This epigram has to be edited to be understood in a modern, less sexist world, but I love those notions. Reading fills a person up. Talking (conference)

1 For a description of the history, philosophy and practice of St. John's College, see Franks (2016).

2 Bacon's ideas on education are well worth reading today. The line quoted here comes from his essay *Of Studies* (1625), which lays out his view of the importance of experience as part of education:

> [Studies] perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need [pruning], by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. . . . Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.

makes a person quick, and ready to converse. Writing forces a person to be exact; that is, precise. A good education should attend to all three of these skills.

The First Day of American Law Class

I brought these themes to the beginning lecture of the first day of the American Law class. I explained that the skills of reading, talking and writing were especially important in the practice of law. A good lawyer like Sir Francis Bacon, who was the Attorney General of England, does the reading and research necessary to know the law, thinks and speaks quickly enough to apply the law in the critical moments of courtroom confrontation, and writes legal arguments that are precise, logically sound and clear. More famously than his legal career, Sir Francis Bacon was the founder of the scientific method in the West, the thinker who envisioned how science, once put on a rigorous, cooperative basis, could remake human life. I like to believe, and argued to my students, that it was from his work as a lawyer that he developed the clarity of mind and the certainty of the central place of practical wisdom that caused him to see such a vision.

The American Law class met in a small classroom, with desks arranged in a circle. One wall was lined with windows looking into a courtyard between classroom buildings; the other three were covered with corkboard, on which Grant and I had put up portraits of people we talked about in class. Plato, Socrates, Kant, Marx and Chairman Mao were there already. As the weeks went by, they were joined by Eleanor Roosevelt, Sojourner Truth,

René Descartes and the First Emperor (黃帝). For my American Law class, I added Francis Bacon, Abraham Lincoln and Clarence Darrow, a famous American progressive lawyer who fought for human rights. My students sat among that crowd of faces, and I liked to imagine that figures from the past looked into this Chinese classroom and watched their ideas come alive again in a setting that might have surprised them. Pleased them too, I hope, although there was no knowing which way their transplanted ideas might grow when grafted onto modern Chinese history.

That first day I told the American Law students something that I have always believed: that law is the laboratory of philosophy. In Humanities classes that all the students had taken the semester before, they read Platonic dialogues and discussed abstract principles. In their science and history classes they were concerned with more practical, material issues, experimenting with the physical world for practical ends. In our class on law they would study an intersection of the abstract and the practical. How does a society make a general, vague, undefined idea like justice apply to the practical transactions of the marketplace?

Also, I told them, I was interested in what they knew and how they felt about any differences they saw between American law as I would be presenting it, and law in China. I asked them to back up any points they wanted to make on that. Show me China's constitution, I asked. Tell me about a case they had seen in a newspaper. My inability to read or speak Chinese (beyond what I needed to ask for meals in the dining hall) was something of a barrier but, in a complicated way, it was a bond as well. My students were constantly struggling with their English, and they both

laughed and sympathized when I struggled with Chinese.[3]

The students cheered when I announced that there would be no tests in the class. I never gave tests in my Dalton classes. Chinese students have too many tests. I wanted them to be interested in our conversations, not preparing for yet another test. Naturally some took advantage of that freedom, although fewer than I feared. Many more thought they were taking advantage when, having failed to do the reading to prepare for a class, they eased their consciences by talking a lot while they were there. They did not know that I was content with this strategy. Of course I wanted them to both prepare and talk in class, but if I had to choose between the two, I would choose for them to talk in class. When people begin to talk about their opinions and ideas they get invested in them. Under those circumstances the ideas will chase them, returning and returning like the Hound of Heaven by Francis Thomspon (1859–1907)[4] until they are thought through. That's what I wanted for all my students, to be chased by ideas until, whether through interest or mere irritation, they turned around to face them.

3 All of these students had been studying English since they were very small. And yet their experience in my classroom was different. In all of their previous English classes, the teacher had been bilingual. If they had a hard time saying something in English, they could lapse into Chinese and ask how to say it. They could not do that with me. If they couldn't make me understand their English, they would have to consult with their classmates until the class' collective knowledge of English managed to get something said. All of this was a good thing for everyone involved. The English speakers on the one side and the Chinese speakers on the other side were forced to confront the unbelievable fact that people use this other language not as some sort of silly, clumsy code, but as a primary means of communication. Until they were brought face to face with my ignorance, I think they assumed that I secretly spoke Chinese behind their backs.

4 See Thompson (1917). The poem tells of someone being relentlessly chased by God until he surrenders. I want my students to feel relentlessly chased by curiosity.

With these housekeeping matters out of the way, there were only a few minutes left on that first day in which to set the stage for how we would talk about American Law. When I began with the question "What is Justice?" they laughed and rolled their eyes, remembering discussions from their Humanities class on Plato. There were several Socrates jokes. In this class, however, my plan was to suggest why, in a practical, laboratory-of-philosophy way, people are still arguing about this question twenty-five centuries after Plato put down his pen. This class would consider the question within practical circumstances, including history, rather than in the rarified, consequence-free air of philosophical discourse. My first assignment was the American Declaration of Independence, and I wanted to make vivid for them that having an opinion about the nature of justice could, in many ages of the world, including perhaps, our own, put someone in danger of death. Socrates, after all, was executed as a criminal. All of the signers of the Declaration would have been executed also if they had not happened to win the American Revolution.[5]

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5 As Benjamin Franklin remarked after signing the Declaration of Independence, "We must, indeed, all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately" (Franklin, n.d.).
The closest analogy to Socrates in Chinese tradition must, I suppose, be Confucius, as they are both famous, sage teachers whose followers wrote down what they said and whose thinking was the fountainhead of a long tradition. The differences, however, are as interesting as the similarities. Confucius, although he did not get the job he wanted as an advisor to a king, was honored in his lifetime and died in venerated old age. For centuries his works were the subject of imperial examinations that could lead to a high appointment in government—he was the great champion of order and hierarchy. By contrast, the City of Athens threw Socrates in jail and executed him. I think this rather shocked some of my Chinese students. We never pushed this topic as far as Jesus, who was also executed by the government, but the students' reactions made me wonder whether it has an effect on the way Westerners understand the world that two executed criminals hold such prominent places in Western tradition.

I asked them about revolutions. Are revolutions against the law? They went quiet. No one would answer. You could hear minds furiously calculating, "Yes, of course revolutions are against the law, but they are the work of heroes and benefactors! Like the 1949 revolution and Chairman Mao. What about revolutionary unrest now, though? That's bad! I think. Well, some of them are good. Others are not." Concluding that the question was unanswerable in any safe way, they sat silent.

I tried again and asked: are revolutions ever justified? They wanted to know what "justified" meant. Demanding a definition in response to a difficult question is a time-honored move in discussion, and especially available to second language learners. From the student's point of view, it turns attention away from them and back to the teacher who, with luck, will continue to talk until the class ends. "Answers delayed are answers avoided!"

I re-phrased the question: are revolutions ever the right thing to do? To this one they felt confident they had a correct response. Yes, revolutions were right sometimes, a natural pushing back against oppression and corruption, part of the unfolding of human progress.

Okay, I continued, how can you tell when oppression and corruption have gotten so bad that revolution is the right thing to do?

Another silence, this one was unbreakable. There was no way they would answer that question. That reluctance, aligned with a general shyness about talking in a first class, meant that we could get no further that day.

I was not unhappy though, as I handed out copies of the Declaration of Independence and told them to think of questions about the first two

paragraphs. It was too soon to tell, of course, but it seemed to me that a few hounds had woken up in some people's minds.

Reading Original Texts—The Declaration of Independence

I was a few minutes late to our second class, not being used to the new semester's schedule. As I hurried to the classroom I found all eight of my students hanging out in the hall, gossiping and eating breakfast. Every door in the large granite and concrete complex in which Dalton operated had an electronic lock and most of them were locked all the time, including the classrooms. The students could not get in the room until I arrived with my card key. It seemed odd to me that students should be locked out of their classrooms, but the whole system was less harsh than it appeared at first. Everyone in the school knew of certain windows and doors that could be propped open or otherwise jimmied, so the locks never seriously impeded anyone.

Lots of things seemed to be like that in China, including the Internet. Draconian obstacles and prohibitions would be announced, but people routinely found their way around them. A rule was not what the authorities *said*, but what they chose to enforce. It was a dance that people did with authority. As a teacher of law, in which the question of the exercise of authority is absolutely central, I found the situation interesting.

As we filed into the classroom on that second day, I wrote on the free-standing whiteboard the word "Authority." After making sure they all knew

what the word meant, which entailed some use of electronic dictionaries;[6] I asked them where authority came from. The customary initial silence followed. By far the hardest task I had at Dalton was convincing my students that I actually wanted them to talk in class. Talking in class was severely at odds with their lifelong experience in Chinese education. Most Chinese education is highly rigid. The test taken by most students[7] at the end of high school, the Gao Kao (高考, Big Test), is fiercely competitive. The classroom years leading to the crucial three days of the Gao Kao are spent working toward scoring well on that test. Students are passive in class and are expected only to absorb information in a form that can be returned verbatim on the test papers. It took my students a while to believe that I wanted them to offer their own ideas rather than to absorb mine.

I kept asking, and finally a few timid answers trickled in uncertainly.

"Your parents? Your friends? The Government?"

Faster now.

"Books? Tradition? Logic?"

All of these suggestions were in the form of questions, as the students

6 A constant tension surrounded the use of electronic devices in class. They could not be forbidden, because so many students really needed them in order to look up English words. Besides, sometimes they were helpful. I often asked my students to track down answers on the spot when a conversation took us into unexpected places. And yet, of course, some students used them for social media or even movies under the table. Especially because I could not read Chinese, I could never be sure, even when I looked at a screen, what the student was doing. In the end, there was no real alternative to an honor system. I guess I will never know the extent to which they found their way around my authority. It was a little dance we did.

7 Except our little group in Dalton, and others who had opted to go to the United States for school. These students, however, had transferred to the SATs all of their cultural focus on the Gao Kao, so that when an SAT test was looming it was all I could do to get them to come to class, let alone to be interested in learning. Very frustrating.

scanned my reactions to try to see which answers were right. I wrote them all on the board, and asked: If someone wanted to start a revolution, which of these sources of authority would he or she look to? Again, it took a while to make sure the question was understood. These kids were very, very smart, but also unsure of their English. Slowly, hesitantly, they hammered out that a revolutionary could not look to the government she wanted to overthrow, and probably not to her parents.

Probably not tradition, either, although it could go both ways; loyalty to government was one tradition, but if the government was itself violating tradition there might be a loophole.

Friends, logic and books, yes. "What about Nature?" someone broke in excitedly, "Isn't that a source of authority?" It went up on the board. Perhaps that person was thinking of the Declaration of Independence, although I noticed that no one suggested the particular phrase that occurs there: "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God."[8] I have idealized the conversation, of course. Some kids were sleepy and others remained warily silent. Still, I told myself hopefully, voices were coming forward. Feeling this tepid approval of how the class was going, I was unprepared for a burst of sudden excitement when we got to the Declaration itself. A crowd of questions leapt up around the line "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal . . . ."

8 The students were all over the map with regard to religion. I had assumed they would be scornful of the Judeo-Christianity of the West, and some were. Others were intrigued and asked me a great many questions about it. Most had been raised with no religion at all, although there were a few who spoke with respect of their grandparents who were Buddhists. One of the students in my American Law class in that first year came to visit me in America a year and a half later. He had been one of my most hard-edged and cynical students and it was a surprise when he told me that he was about to be baptized into a Christian church.

It turned out that passions ran high on this claim. Apparently there had been arguments over it in the dormitory the night before. "Good for you, Thomas Jefferson!"[9] I thought, and did my best to pour gasoline on the fire.

Some kids thought that the Declaration was right and that equality among people was in fact self-evident. "Look at tiny babies. All of them are the same," they argued. Others thought it was self-evident that people are *not* equal. Some are tall, some are short, some are smart, some are artistic, and some are musical. Everybody is different!

If America is founded on the claim that everyone is the same, it is founded on a lie. Is there a difference between being the same and being equal? Even if there is, how can you say that anything is self-evident about it? Maybe the smarter people really are better. Certainly it's the smarter people you want running the government. But people who think they are smart can be the stupidest of all. The practical workers should run the government.

I had dropped out of the conversation, but pretty soon they all turned to me to show them the way out of this disagreement. Chinese students may dislike disagreement more than American students, who often take satisfaction in having unusual opinions. Colleagues at the school had warned us that Chinese students are upset by disharmony, and it appeared to be true. I'm sure that part of my Chinese students' tendency to be quiet in class was simply a shyness about complex discussions in a second language, and part

9 Thomas Jefferson, who became the third president of the United States, wrote the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, with some assistance from Benjamin Franklin. Interestingly, Franklin edited this crucial line. Whereas Jefferson had drafted, "We hold these truths to be sacred . . . ." Franklin struck out "sacred" and put in "self-evident." See Isaacson (2004).

was their disbelief that I wanted them to talk, but a contributing cause was the ever-present fear of disagreement causing discord. On this occasion, they waited for me to make the classroom harmonious again.

They were disappointed when I only complimented them on their arguments and handed out the United States Constitution. I wanted them to live with disagreement in the air. Perhaps it was their desire for harmony, ironically, which prevented them from challenging me in this.

Reading Original Texts: The United States Constitution

Alas, on its face the United States Constitution is not a riveting document. It is not easy or compelling to read. As constitutions go it is blessedly short, but it is written in the language of lawyers. The classes that followed were painful exercises in trying to convey to my Chinese students how enormous amounts of meaning and importance can be packed into boring, mostly colorless but (often because it is so precise) confusing English. Phrases like “due process” and “equal protection” seem dull until you learn how individual people’s livelihoods, and indeed their lives, may turn on how they are interpreted.

Studying law, at least the Common Law on which the legal systems of Britain and America are based, depends heavily on careful, dispassionate parsing of words and phrases. This attention to precision of meaning is part of the strangeness of “thinking like a lawyer,” and is challenging for anyone approaching the subject. I often wondered if, for my Chinese students studying in a second language, this challenge was complicated by differences between Chinese and English. Mandarin Chinese is so full of

homophones and overlapping meanings that there is much more room for interpretation, or at least that's how it looks to me. If that is so, it might have seemed especially odd to my Chinese students that words on paper should be taken so seriously and parsed so carefully, as if they stood alone, meaning some single objective thing, outside of human context.

Relatedly, perhaps, my Chinese students were generally doubtful about the way in which the American system relied so strongly on legal structures and procedures rather than on people. It sounded inhuman to them, like words out of human context. I had led up to the American state documents by way of the Enlightenment, which they had studied in other classes.

Enlightenment ideas, I claimed, especially economic ideas, abandoned the search for virtue in human beings, and sought to use human greed and ambition as an engine for a prosperous society. So the Constitution does not try to find a virtuous and competent President, or Congress, or Judiciary. Everyone *hopes* that these officials will be virtuous, but the government does not depend on their virtue. Instead, it sets up legal structures and procedures whereby these three branches of government will police each other.

This is the heart of the doctrine of the Separation of Powers. The great insight is that human beings must stop looking, fruitlessly, for a good king, or a trustworthy central organizing authority. No one can be trusted with power. In that predicament, the writers of the United States Constitution believed, the only thing to do was to invent procedures that will contain the inevitable quarrels among people seeking power and make those quarrels productive. Such a system should work whether the people in charge are good people or whether they are awful people.

My students hated this idea. They were sure that lots of people would do competent and honest, virtuous work, so that good government only required finding those virtuous people and putting them in charge. I tested this belief with as many questions as I could think of. "Do virtuous people want power?" I asked. "What kinds of people do want power?" And, "What happens to virtue when it gains power?" They were taken aback by these challenges. Every day for a week or two, I came into the classroom and wrote on the whiteboard a saying that is very famous in Western political thinking: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."[10] Every day one of my students would object, having thought of a new argument to try to prove that saying false.

Many of those arguments revolved around education. This was an especially fun conversation because they had never thought about the purpose of education before, despite all the years they had spent being educated. Tasks had been set them, and information presented to them, and tests administered as hoops to be jumped through, but it had not occurred to them to wonder what they were being shaped for, or why they were studying the particular things they did.

"If a person has a good education," a student would argue, "they will do right. They will not be corrupted by power." So, I responded, "you are saying that education teaches virtue? Can virtue be taught?" They laughed, recognizing the question from their study of Plato's *Meno* in the previous semester. I was glad to have them see, in the context of our class on Law, why people care so much about that question. If virtue could be

10 "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men." (Dalberg, 1907)

taught, and we knew how to teach it, societies would not need doctrines like the Separation of Powers. We would not need to worry about power corrupting people.

Someone remembered that, as small children, they had all taken classes on virtue and how to be good. That caused more laughter, as they mockingly quoted multiple choice tests they had taken on how to behave well: "If someone steals your backpack, you should

a. beat them up
b. steal theirs
c. tell the teacher"

Mostly they had thought those tests were silly and boring. Anyone could see what answer the teacher wanted, so the students could always get a good grade by giving it. They were not inclined to think they had learned much about virtue from that exercise. They had only learned how to do well on tests.

Still, they did not want to concede that virtue could not be taught and that power would always corrupt. So, I asked, if virtue classes are not the way to make people good, is there a kind of education that will? What kind of education will cause people to become the good people you need in order to have good government and a good society?

"People should study history," one student offered. "Learn which examples to follow and which to avoid." This seemed like a wise approach, so we began to explore possible examples of good and bad people. Unless we went very far back in history, there was disagreement over whether a particular person was to be admired or not. Finally, I asked them who they actually admired—who did they themselves use as examples of people they most wanted to be like? Many of the names that came up were

those of celebrities, famous, wealthy and accomplished, but not primarily known for virtue.

It was an interesting conversation although, like Plato, we did not reach a clear conclusion about whether virtue could be taught. That was enough for my purposes, however. What I wanted them to realize was that the question was difficult enough that the strategy of the American government was a reasonable alternative to the task of creating virtuous people. Rather than hope for virtuous people, the strategy of the United States Constitution is to fashion a government that will operate successfully even if people are not entirely virtuous, but are acting for motives of greed and ambition. My students continued to be dubious about this strategy, but our discussions led them to see why it made sense to the writers of the Constitution.

I learned later that in raising these issues I had inadvertently stepped into an East vs. West discussion that had been going on elsewhere in the school. In their class on Chinese heritage, one of the teachers of that class often framed his presentations around comparisons between East and West.

"Chinese do not need Separation of Powers," he claimed, "because we are not weak and greedy like Westerners!"

That, at least, is how my students characterized what was said. This particular teacher didn't interact much with the foreign faculty. My students attributed to him what may have been their own reflections. They suggested in our discussions that the focus on the principle that power corrupts, leading to doctrines like the Separation of Powers, might be needed in the West because Westerners were simply not as culturally humane as Chinese.

Reflecting on these arguments, I pushed them further in my own mind, experimenting with using my training as a lawyer to be an advocate for this teacher's position. I had to admit, for example, that it was Westerners

who had come up with the theological notion of "original sin," according to which human beings were so deeply, ineradicably flawed that only the sacrifice of God's Son Jesus could rescue us.[11] Obviously, it might be said, Westerners recognized their own capacity for deep evil, an evil that the innocent Chinese had suffered from so horribly when oppressed by Westerners during colonial times. Chinese, by contrast, had never sailed around the world to exploit other peoples, but had been content to enjoy their own highly civilized society to themselves. China did not need the doctrine of the Separation of Powers, I imagined this teacher arguing, because China does not have a tradition of the uncompromising condemnation of human nature. Therefore, China can rely on its rulers to be fair and just.

The episode led to the awareness of a new dimension to my teaching experience. Once I had been alerted to it, I saw that a running comparison between East and West was a big part of my student's lives. They liked and spent time with all things American: movies and music, Grant and me and the other Western faculty at Dalton, and especially technology. (Steve Jobs was enjoying a vogue in China when we were there.) But they sometimes felt rather bad about doing so, as if they were deserting their own traditions.

Dalton students in particular may have felt torn in this way because they had decided to go to America for their college education. It will be a continuing issue for education in an increasingly globalized world, I suppose. How do we offer to students the knowledge that should be common to all, and also affirm their very valuable pride in their own

11 See for example, Augustine, *Confessions*, Book II.

identity? Ideally, we should offer to students a place from which they can assess what they think is true about human nature, without regard to where the ideas come from.

Writing about Ideas—Constitutions and the Separation of Powers

When the time came for the first paper in the American Law class, I asked the students to write on the United States Constitution. I told them I was particularly curious about how they would analyze this question of the Separation of Powers, as well as the related doctrine, the Rule of Law.

The Rule of Law is the principle, deeply embedded in American ideas, that the Law is the highest authority in the society, higher than any person. The most famous statement of this principle was made by John Adams, the second President, who proudly avowed that the United States is "a government of laws, not of men" (Adams, 106).

Several students compared the United States Constitution with the Chinese Constitution. One laid both the similarities and the differences at the feet of Confucius. The Chinese Constitution, this student pointed out, has clauses guaranteeing freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but somehow those guarantees do not play the prominent public role in mainland China that they play in America. This student argued that this has come about because the Rule of Law does not seem admirable when approached from the point of view of Chinese tradition. Laws should not control human beings, because true humanity was above law and better

than law. For Confucius, the ideal is to be good enough that you don't need laws. Good people can see when it is better to enforce harmony than to follow a divisive law. One effect of this attitude is that following a law is evidence that someone is not a good enough person. It's only Westerners who cannot trust themselves to be good, and who therefore need a Rule of Law that places laws above the human opinions of the rulers.

Of those who wrote about the Separation of Powers, opinions were mixed. Two approved of the doctrine, on different grounds. One thought that having three competing centers of power in government; the executive branch, led by the President, the legislative branch led by Congress, and the judicial branch led by the Supreme Court, made for interesting shifting alliances, avoiding a prisoner's dilemma situation that happens when two people are trying to decide whether to betray each other. Another, relatedly, pointed out that the three types of officials were chosen differently, so that they would have different people to whom they were grateful.

Other students expressed doubts about the doctrine, for similar but not identical reasons. These opined that a Separation of Powers arrangement was disorderly and inefficient, and likely to fall out of balance, even if it succeeded in reducing corruption. Most disliked it for that reason, but one was inclined to think the risks were worth it, as they would be smaller than the risks of having a single person in charge. She quoted a Chinese proverb that the relationship between the people and the Emperor is like the relationship between the ocean and a boat; the people can support the Emperor, or they can storm, rise up and overturn him. She argued that it might prevent storms and uprisings if the responsibilities of government were divided among the branches, rather than being concentrated on one

person as a target. The inefficiency and disorderliness of the Separation of Powers doctrine might be good, she thought.

Well, they were all thinking, so my job was done.

Talking Together about Fields of Law

During the rest of the semester, we studied different areas of law and exchanged ideas about them. We studied the field of Property Law. I was interested in whether private property as defined by British and American common law would seem strange or offensive to my Chinese students. Not really. They loved the idea and were convinced that China was moving in that direction.[12] They also loved the field of law dealing with business arrangements, called Contracts. They saw in the principles of Contract Law lots of freedom to agree among merchants on the rules that would control a deal, rather than trying to remember and follow ones that the government had imposed. I set for them an exercise in contract negotiation, where some students took the role of clients with differing interests and decision-making authority, while others took the role of lawyers representing the clients at the bargaining table, trying to get the best deal on their clients' behalf. Tough negotiators, sharks and future deal-makers came surging forward, amid much giggling.

Responding to their interests, I gave them an overview of the strange and wonderful world of Financial Law, too. I had begun my legal career

12 The statement *zhìfù guāngróng* (致富光荣 "riches are glorious"), is sometimes cited as the motto of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms. It flies in the face of decades of Communist doctrine, but is squarely in line with many previous centuries of Chinese mercantile tradition.

working for a Wall Street firm, and it was a pleasure to offer a look into the unpredictable behavior of the world's economic structures.

Criminal Law, naturally, was the most attractively dramatic subject that we covered. My original idea for the course had been to stage as a final project a mock Supreme Court argument regarding some point of law. Seeing how interested they were in trials, however, I changed the plan and decided to do a mock murder trial. This greatly increased the dramatic possibilities, which seems appropriate when it comes to trial work. All of them had watched a lot of American crime dramas,[13] including a lot of courtroom scenes, so this part of the course came alive.

Switching to a mock trial as the final project also took advantage of some of the conversations we had had early in the semester about the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. I was pleased with that, because those early conversations had seemed to me important.

Many of the students noticed that the Bill of Rights was deeply concerned with Criminal Law. Furthermore, as they saw it, the document was aimed specifically at *protecting* criminals. That seemed immensely odd to them. Why was the United States Constitution so concerned with how the government treated criminals? Criminals are bad people, surely. Why would great figures like George Washington or Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson care so much about them? When I turned the question

13 I showed them some as part of the course. *Anatomy of a Murder* didn't grab them, but they loved *My Cousin Vinny*, and had a lot of questions about *Twelve Angry Men*, which they found impressive.

back on the students, asking them to try to answer it themselves, there was a long silence. For a while it was a genuinely puzzled silence. Then, slowly, the silence became a wary one, instead. Finally someone found a way to say something:

> I guess its all part of the same distrust of the authority of government. Government gets to decide who is a criminal. That's a big power.

More silence. No one wanted to pursue the implications of that thought. I decided not to press on it.

Preparing for Trial—Making Stories

The possibility of sympathizing with criminals was made more fun as we cast parts for our mock trial. I had found materials for a mock trial on the Internet, which consisted of lots of background documents, briefs,[14] an arraignment,[15] some court opinions on preliminary issues, as well as depositions[16] from each of the proposed witnesses. All of these official papers took a lot of explaining. My students were surprised by how public

14 A "brief" is the document that a lawyer files with a court, containing the lawyer's argument on behalf of a client or Defendant.

15 The "arraignment" is the proceeding in which the Defendant who is accused of a crime is brought to court before a judge in order to plead guilty or not guilty. Only if the Defendant pleads "not guilty" does the judge set the matter down for trial.

16 A "deposition" is a proceeding that takes place outside a courtroom, when the lawyers ask questions of all of the witnesses to an alleged crime in order to find out what the witnesses will say at trial.

all the proceedings are in America, how lawyers challenged everything, how written law governed so much instead of the judge, and, as a consequence of all that, how much of a written record there is in a criminal case. These things reinforced their surprise at how tenderly criminals seemed to be treated. They became increasingly doubtful about this system.

At one point I quoted to them Lord Blackstone's famous dictum that it is better for ten guilty people to go free than for one innocent person to be wrongly punished (Blackstone, circa 1760). They were frankly flabbergasted by such an idea. When they got over their disbelief that any responsible person had said such a thing, they concluded that perhaps the principle was sweet in a way, but that it was ridiculous, naïve and dangerous in practice.

Perhaps it is. Certainly it is not always honored, even in Britain and America. In China, where there are still strong memories of a more devastating social disorder than Americans have felt since the days of our Civil War, it may seem impossibly foolish, even to an idealistic set of high school students, to let a suspected wrong-doer free on some technicality.

Whatever their reservations about the American trial system, they agreed that, considered as theater, trial was nothing but fun. The materials of the legal case worked fine as a script, for the most part. The case was one of attempted murder, so both the accused and the victim would have a chance to testify at our mock trial. The students did a great job throwing emotion into both parts. Costumes were carefully considered, expressive inflections practiced, and gestures chosen. These kids did a lot of drama as part of the Dalton program, and they loved it.

Law is not entirely a scripted play, however, as the students discovered.

They could practice direct examinations[17] and opening statements[18] as if they were lines learned for a play, but they did not know what to do with cross-examination,[19] and they couldn't plan a closing statement fully until the results of cross-examination were known. They were puzzled about how to prepare. There were too many loose ends. They would have to speak and think quickly on the day of trial in order to do well.

My chief piece of advice for them was to turn their case into a story. Storytelling is what trial presentation is all about. A good lawyer looks at a pile of facts and chooses from it what to emphasize in order to make a persuasive story. The prosecuting attorney, whose job it is to convict people accused of crimes, looks at the facts to which the witnesses testify and chooses to emphasize the ones that seem to prove motive and guilt, that seem to show that the Defendant both committed the crime and intended to commit the crime.

The defending attorney, whose job it is to defend people accused of crimes, looks at the same facts and chooses to emphasize the ones that

17 A "direct examination" is when a lawyer asks questions of a so-called "friendly witness" that the lawyer wants to testify.

18 An "opening statement" is when a lawyer, prior to bringing any witnesses before the jury, explains what the lawyer intends to prove during the trial. It is the moment when the lawyer tells the jury the story as the lawyer wants the jury to see it.

19 A "cross-examination" is when a lawyer gets to test the evidence of a witness that is saying things that are damaging to the lawyer's client; a so-called "hostile witness." In cross-examination the lawyer can ask very pointed questions designed to show where there are flaws in the witness' testimony, or evidence that supports a different way of looking at things. Cross-examination cannot be rehearsed because no lawyer wants to give away to the witness what questions will be asked. Therefore, lawyers and witnesses both must guess at what is likely to be asked and make plans for the answers. Only on the day of the trial does the real examination unfold.

show innocence, that the prosecution has the wrong person, or, if not that, that whole occurrence was an accident and no harm was meant. Any human situation generates evidence that will support many stories. The job of a lawyer is to tell the evidence-based story that is most helpful to the client's interests. Then, after the stories have been told, it is the job of the jury, the twelve people listening to the evidence and the statements of the lawyers, to decide which story to believe.

My students had a very hard time thinking of things in this way. I made the assignment twice, with two different approaches. First they had to tell the story of what happened from their client's point of view. I wanted them to show me which facts in the materials they used to build that story, and which facts seemed to point against that story. They did not understand that assignment and simply turned in lists of facts. Facts should be facts, they thought. The idea of "good facts" and "bad facts," so familiar to a lawyer, seemed wrong to them.

I tried again. We talked at length about the legal concept of "relevance," and I asked them to list the statements in the materials that were *relevant* to the way their clients saw the events. They disliked this assignment even more. Again it seemed wrong to them that facts could be more important or less important. They felt it was more honest to present everything. The more we talked about it, the more it became clear that the notion of an advocate, especially a paid advocate, was very troubling to them. A lawyer should be on the side of truth. They thought that if they downplayed some facts in favor of others they were being dishonest.

As they became more frustrated with the idea of telling a story, they became restive over the desire to know what "really" happened to

the Defendant and victim in the case.[20] This, I believe, flowed mostly from TV and movies, although perhaps it was reinforced by a desire for harmony. They wanted to see some great police work, a scientific expert witness, maybe, that would resolve the question of whether the Defendant was guilty in such a way that everyone would harmoniously agree. Once again, they hated all these loose ends. How can you run a justice system, they complained, when so much is left in doubt? The police should keep investigating until they were sure of what happened, and then there would be certainty and harmony. There must be a way to avoid doubt.

We had a lot of discussion about this. I claimed over and over that, in many cases, especially the ones that got as far as a jury trial, there is nothing that can be done to make the situation indisputably clear. Often an issue comes down to which witnesses the jury believes, and there is no way to put it on any other footing. A bank clerk testifies that she recognizes the Defendant[21] as the person who robbed the bank, whereas another person says that she saw the Defendant elsewhere at the time the bank was robbed. Who should be believed? Either could easily be perfectly sincere but wrong. Eyewitness testimony is notoriously unreliable, yet, in many cases, it is all we have. That's why we have juries, to represent the community in making such decisions.

The students didn't like this idea, either. Who were the people on a jury that they got to decide such things? Wouldn't it be better if a trained judge made those decisions—or maybe a scientist?

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20 The case we did in our American Law class was a fictional one, so there was no answer to that question.

21 The "Defendant" is the legal name for the person who is accused of a crime.

These conversations seemed to me immensely important; a crossroads of ideas that I wanted my students to bring out into the open. Philosophical issues were at stake that connected to the discussions we had at the beginning of the semester around the Separation of Powers doctrine and the Rule of Law. Are all human beings fallible as well as corruptible, kings, judges, lawyers and witnesses, too? Is it better to seek harmony at some cost to the rights of accused criminals, or to take the risks of protecting rights and live in doubt and disagreement and perhaps danger? People have been reading, talking and writing about these matters for all of human history.

The most important point of all, and the one that the students had the most difficulty grasping, is that each of us *makes* the coherence of experience. A surprising aspect of this class, as I have already mentioned, was how hard the students found it to create a story out of a pile of facts, and to take on the role of advocate for such a story. Yet, as I saw it (perhaps in my Western way), the creation of a story is the only means by which the big philosophical questions get decided, either in a personal life or for a nation. No king or judge can prove to us scientifically that human beings are or are not corruptible and need a Rule of Law or a Separation of Powers doctrine. No king or judge can set scientifically the right balance between societal harmony and individual human rights, or even prove that the two things are in tension.

Instead, people tell different stories about those things. The theological idea of "original sin" is a famous story about human nature, for example. Another story about human nature is implied in the statement that "we hold these truths to be self-evident," and yet another in the story that Marxism tells about the inevitabilities of history. We choose what to believe about

human nature or about history on the basis of which story seems persuasive. We all act as jurors about history, listening to various advocates tell stories that try to account for the facts, and then choosing which story to believe. My students were not immediately persuaded by this way of seeing things, this story, but they were thinking about it.

The Day of Trial

The day of the trial arrived. We set up a judge's bench on the stage of a theater that holds about a hundred people. Grant, also a law-school graduate, agreed to be the judge. I took the role of bailiff,[22] seated on stage to the left of the judge's place. A chair for witnesses was on the judge's right side. The whole school was invited to be the jury from the audience perspective, and the seats were pretty full. My students sat at two counsel tables, one for the prosecutor and one for the Defendant, in the space between the audience/jury and the stage. They would speak to the jury from a podium between the tables.

The students looked *great*. All of them rose to the occasion. Those playing the role of lawyers dressed with professionalism, and behaved with forensic dignity. Those playing the role of witnesses were jauntily in character. I especially liked the Defendant, the person who was accused of attempting to murder the victim. She is a self-contained, soft-spoken student in daily life, but she now displayed a loud, emotional, impulsive persona, even while people were milling around getting ready. It looked

22 The "bailiff" is the person who polices the courtroom, swears in the witnesses and generally does the practical errands that make the trial run smoothly.

like a quarrel would spring up between her and the victim. The lawyers kept them apart.

When enough of the audience was looking expectant, I stood up and commanded, in a near shout, "*All rise*." The audience was confused by this, as it is not an English expression they were used to, but my students stood up, and the audience saw the idea and somewhat raggedly followed. I pursued my script, trying to establish a legal atmosphere with stentorian tones:

> Hear Ye, Hear Ye! The Circuit Court of the State of Lone Star[23] is now in Session, the Honorable Grant Franks presiding.

Uncertain giggles and whispers arose as Grant walked in with slow judicial poise, sat down in the central judge's chair, and startled everyone by banging a loud gavel (in this case a claw hammer we had unearthed from a closet). He said "You may be seated" into the sudden silence. The audience subsided into their places, a little awed.

The case itself was entitled *The State of Lone Star v. Lisa Richardson*. Ms. Richardson was accused of attempted murder for having shot her boyfriend, Paul Tu, in front of his house somewhere in the fictional town of Armadillo. Richardson and Tu had begun their relationship some years earlier in an Armadillo bar. What began as a love affair evolved into a friendly business venture, which then became a *failed* love affair and a very *un*friendly business dispute. She wanted to marry him; he wanted to

23 The State of Lone Star was a fictional state invented by the mock trial materialsm.

have nothing to do with her. At the end of a brusque confrontation in front of his house, guns came out and he wound up lying on the driveway, shot in the chest. Was it a crime of passion, or had she acted in self-defense when he reached for a weapon?

The student acting as Paul Tu (now recovered) played the role of no-good, conniving jerk with real conviction. Everyone disliked him so much that they wanted him dead, but the jury instructions were clear that "He had it coming to him!" is not a legal defense in this jurisdiction. The audience was on the edge of its seats as the Defendant took the stand in her own defense. She told her own story on direct examination, and then faced cross examination from a prosecuting attorney who had seen too many bad television trial scenes. I had explained to the class that cross-examination is aimed at eliciting factual admissions from the witness, but the prosecutor wanted to make his witness break down on the stand and confess her guilt. The cross examination as he imagined it went like this:

Prosecutor: "Isn't it a *fact* Ms. Richardson, that you were in love with Paul Tu!?"

Richardson: "Yes! I can't hide it anymore!"

Prosecutor: "And isn't it a *fact* that you wanted to marry him!?"

Richardson: "Oh, yes! God, yes. More than anything!"

Prosecutor: "And when he turned you down, you couldn't stand it, could you?"

Richardson: "It hurt so much ...."

Prosecutor: "You wanted revenge, didn't you? *Didn't you?* He couldn't treat you like that! You needed to make him pay, and pay good!"

Richardson: “Yes! Yes! He wasn’t going to get away with it ....”

Prosecutor: “... and that’s why you *pulled out your gun and* ***shot him down in cold blood, ISN’T THAT RIGHT?***”

Richardson: [Weeping hysterically] “Yes, I admit it! I wanted him dead, and I shot him. With premeditation as defined in the State of Lone Star Criminal Code section 714 (b)(i) subparagraph (7)!”

In the real world, the cross-examination sounded more like this:

PA: “Isn’t it a *fact*, Ms. Richardson, that you were in love with Paul Tu!?”

Defense: “Objection! Badgering the witness.”

Judge: “Sustained. Try again, counselor.”

[Repeat *ad infinitum*.]

All the same, things looked bad for Lisa who had motive, means, opportunity *and* a smoking gun in her hand.

From my point of view as the bailiff, the trial went smoothly, if a little long. It was ten at night before everything was done. I was worried the jury would be bored, but passionate closing arguments had woken them up, just as they are supposed to do. I removed the jury from the room and led them into a classroom where I asked for a show of hands about guilt. They complained loudly—“Objection!” they called out, having learned something from the trial. They didn’t want to do a show of hands. They wanted to look at the exhibits and think about it, just like a real jury, and they had a lot of questions for me about the facts and law. We managed

a compromise, although the time I allowed them was brief. I was very conscious that the bailiff in this case was also responsible to the jury's parents for seeing that the jury got to bed at a reasonable hour.

Poor Lisa Richardson was found guilty, and the jury trooped solemnly back into the courtroom to seal her fate. The defending team of lawyers was disappointed, of course, although I assured them later (contrary to the ethics of bailiffing) that there had been disagreement and argument in the jury deliberations. Just as in any case there were hard feelings and claims that advantage had been taken in some way by opposing counsel, or that the judge had decided something wrongly. It would be easy to make them see how the whole appellate process came into being. Really, though, the semester was over in that blaze of glory. I left off being a teacher for a celebratory moment and congratulated all of my students on their excellent work.

Conclusion

Looking back on it now, I try to imagine what, if anything will stay in the students' minds from this encounter with American Law. I'd like them to remember the lawyer Francis Bacon, the founder of the scientific method in the West, who believed in the value of experience and that lawyers must read and talk and write well. I'd like the questions of the sources of Authority and the corruptions of power to chase them like the Hound of Heaven. Probably in reality, what they will remember will be the courtroom, and all the exciting guesses and uncertainties that go with trial work.

If so, I hope they will carry away how, in the end, the trial was a clash of stories. The two students who gave the closing arguments told different stories about what had happened between Paul Tu and Lisa Richardson, and the jury's decision was about which story to believe. That process of developing and arguing for stories is common to everything they studied: philosophy with its proposed systems, science and history with their hypotheses and theories, and law as the laboratory of philosophy.

These students are a rising generation of Chinese. They may someday be part of shaping a country with a changing organizing story. Today, the Marxism story does not seem to persuade many people anymore. What will replace it?

An alternative story, the idealism of the American state documents, came off to my Chinese students as interesting and noble-sounding, but rooted in a shocking idea of the corruptibility of human nature, and perhaps impractical. Maybe it is just not right for China, if only because the story did not arise naturally there. What story can these students and their peers tell about what has happened and is happening in China that accounts for its proud history and shows a way into its future?

The jury waits.

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傳統文化與通識教育

——「唐詩經典研讀」通識核心課程教學札記

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一、引言

唐詩是中國古典詩歌的頂峰，濃縮了古典詩歌語言的精華。不僅其中名篇是經典，在中國文學史上，整個唐詩也堪稱經典。正如袁行霈教授所言：「整個唐代詩歌，其在文學史上的一個重要意義是確立了詩的規範，此後的詩只有遵循這規範和偏離這規範兩條路。明詩的主流是遵循這規範，宋詩的主流是偏離這規範，清詩有所遵循也有所偏離，但不管怎樣都是圍繞着唐詩所建立的規範來轉。……這樣看來，在整個中國詩歌史上，唐詩居於中心的地位就十分清楚了。」（袁行霈，2006，頁205–206）唐詩是通過唐代詩人生存狀態的展示，為中華民族提供了奮發上進的精神。也正是因為如此，千百年來，唐詩一直受到人們的喜愛，成為中國文化最值得珍視的瑰寶。唐詩之所以在當時和後世有着巨大的魅力，歸根到底在於其中蘊含的精神，也集中於唐詩所具備的特質，更是傳統文學之中的精髓。因此，唐詩經

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典已經成為傳承傳統文化的重要載體，同時構成了近世中華文化共同體的文學和文化經典。

對於經典的態度，決定了讀書的品位與境界。我們先檢討一下國人對於經典的幾種態度：一是迷信經典。曾幾何時，我們的國家，我們的社會曾經對所謂的「紅色經典」特別崇尚，而且把「經典」限制為狹隘的幾部書，從而達到了迷信發狂的程度，上一世紀後期極度的個人崇拜與迷信「紅色經典」不無關係。二是漠視經典。也因為曾經一時對於「紅色經典」的迷信，當社會變遷轉型人們從夢中醒來時，覺得一切都變得虛空，於是對於經典就厭倦起來，加以商業時代消費式快餐文化的流行，網路社會淺嘗輒止閱讀習慣的養成，「低俗」、「媚俗」、「庸俗」的風氣甚囂塵上，正常的經典閱讀逐漸被邊緣化甚至漠視了。三是稀釋經典。就教學內容和學術研究而言，其範圍和對象也由上一世紀的經典研究逐漸泛化，其理論根源雖然緣於後現代主義的風靡，而對於中國的經典，則更多是現實因素導致的。如上一世紀常稱的「古典文學」後來逐漸為「古代文學」的術語所代替，這是由於古典文學重於經典，境界較高而範圍不大，而隨着研究人員的增多，也就將古代所有方面的文學納入其中了，術語的變化也昭示着經典的泛化。因為以上的情況，我們就在高等學校的人文學科教學當中提倡「回歸經典」，也就是對於經典採取科學的態度，以返回正常的閱讀狀態。在這方面，唐詩經典的研讀就更有典範意義。這是我們開設唐詩經典這門通識核心課程的緣起。

「唐詩經典」和「文化傳統」是兩個相互聯繫的關鍵字。對於傳統的認知，也是一個世紀性的話題，因為上一世紀初期，「五四」運動揭開了新文化運動的序幕，但因矯枉過正而對傳統文化作了片面的否定，尤其是對古代文學的否定，已經成為一股潮流，直至世紀後半葉的「文化大革命」，否定傳統文化達到了極端。一個世紀否定傳統

的結果，造成了人們對於傳統失去了敬畏之心。我們強調回歸經典，加強傳統認知，不僅是個人的，當下的，社會的，也是文學的，學術的，文化的。我們開設「唐詩經典研讀」這門通識核心課程，以「認知傳統」作為宗旨之一，既是一種憧憬，也是一種擔當；同時，我們強調「回歸經典」，既是對讀書的要求，也是指讀詩的境界。研讀唐詩和認知傳統，對於當代文化精神的建構也具有原發性的營養價值。

二、經典研讀與傳統認知

我們走進唐詩，就如同進入了五彩繽紛的世界。盧照鄰《元日述懷》云：「筮仕無中秋，歸耕有外臣。人歌小歲酒，花舞大唐春。草色迷三徑，風光動四鄰。願得長如此，年年物候新。」[1]元日歲酒，草色風光，人歌花舞，物候常新。「九天閶闔開宮殿，萬國衣冠拜冕旒」（《和賈至舍人早朝大明宮之作》），這是王維描繪唐代大明宮的詩句，這裏是萬國朝拜的國際中心，表現出當時的唐朝是一個國際型的大帝國。「忽如一夜春風來，千樹萬樹梨花開」（《白雪歌送武判官歸京》），這是岑參描寫的西域風光，雖然荒寒無比，但仍然是開闊的境界，給人以極為強大的精神力量。「無邊落木蕭蕭下，不盡長江滾滾來」（《登高》），這是杜甫描寫長江瞿塘峽的詩句，在實大聲弘的景色當中，融注了自己壯志難酬的感慨。「君不見黃河之水天上來，奔流到海不復回」（《將進酒》），這是李白對時光流逝所發出的深沉慨歎，但仍然壯志激昂，境界崇高，生命的體悟流動於其中。「春江潮水連海平，海上明月共潮生」，張若虛的《春江花月夜》不僅是大好景色的描繪，也是生命前程的憧憬。「欲窮千里目，更上一層樓」

1 本文所引唐詩，均據《全唐詩》，中華書局1960年繁體豎版，為節省篇幅起見，僅標出篇名，不加注頁碼。特殊情況另行出注。

（王之渙《登鸛雀樓》），這不僅是一時登樓的展望，也是精神境界的昇華。李商隱的「春蠶到死絲方盡，蠟炬成灰淚始乾」（《無題》），李白「桃花潭水深千尺，不及汪倫送我情」（《贈汪倫》），王勃的「海內存知己，天涯若比鄰」（《送杜少府之任蜀川》），對於愛情的執着，對於友情的真摯，都是唐詩精神的表現。至於當時個性張揚的詩篇，更是不勝枚舉，僅以李白而言，就有：「天生我才必有用，千金散金還復來」（《將進酒》），「人生得意須盡歡，莫使金樽空對月」（同前），「安能摧眉折腰事權貴，使我不得開心顏」（《行路難》），「俱懷逸興壯思飛，欲上青天攬明月」（《宣州謝朓樓餞別校書叔雲》）。

唐詩代表中國抒情文學的最高成就，具有張揚個性的特點，也表現了昂揚奮發的精神風貌。唐代是中國歷史上最為鼎盛的朝代，也是富有詩性的朝代，那種奮發上進的積極精神和相容並包的時代氛圍，為詩歌的發展與繁榮提供了最為合適的土壤。唐詩雖然是農業社會培育出來的文化碩果，但作為文學與文化，其本身具有無限的超越性，從中煥發出來的詩性、理性與人性，隨着時代的推移而日久彌新。故而我們現在研讀唐詩，目的在於陶冶自己的情操，增進自己的素養，振奮自己的精神，提升自己的境界。這裏我們引用一位浙江大學本科學生周繼紅所談論的修讀「唐詩經典研讀」的體會，以說明學習唐詩對於年青一代的意義：

> 唐詩是我們中華民族的瑰寶，是每一個炎黃子孫都應該學習的國學經典，這也正是我選讀這一門課的初衷。正如我們的校歌中唱道的：「形上謂道兮，形下謂器。」（馬一浮《浙江大學校歌》）然而現在我們大多是在追求形下的「器」，如各種物理、數學知識，求取考試技巧，卻忽略了對形上的「道」的追

求。通過「唐詩經典研讀」這門課的學習，讓我加深了中華文化「道」的理解。唐詩不僅僅是文字的按規律排列組合，從一首首風格特異的唐詩中，我讀到了中國古代文人的文人風骨。所謂文人風骨，一方面是文人之風，便是指詩人們的文采斐然，博學多才，而更重要的是文人風骨。在課堂上，我領略到了李白的不慕權貴，自由灑脫；領略到了杜甫的心繫天下，憂國憂民；領略到了白居易的關注疾苦，不忘蒼生；領略到了王維的清新質樸，不事雕飾……與這些詩人的「相遇」讓我更加理性地看待我們現在對文學的態度。在這種網路瘋行、全民娛樂的浪潮下，這種文人風骨還在不在呢？這種對文字的尊崇還在不在呢？我們真的應該靜下心來，讀幾首詩，寫幾首詩，這是對自己的昇華，也是對文化的尊重。

唐詩是唐代民族精神、時代精神和文化精神的萃聚，唐代又是中國歷史上最為強盛的時代，以其政治的開明，思想的解放，國力的強盛，武功的顯赫著稱於世，其文化精神表現為氣象恢弘。唐人那種涵蓋宇宙的胸懷並不容某一種思想佔據獨尊的地位，因而貫穿唐代的思想是儒、釋、道三種的抗衡與碰撞。這樣的時代精神撼動着詩人的心靈，使其充滿了自信心和自豪感，映射於唐代詩壇，表現出昂揚壯大和奮發上進的氣象，體現出蓬勃的朝氣和青春的旋律，也就充滿着活力和創造力。因此研讀唐詩，也就能夠在一定程度上蕩滌胸中的塊壘，陶冶高尚的情操，驅除功利的困擾，提升精神的境界。

就文學本身的閱讀和學習而言，唐詩經典也是最值得注重的方面。在中國歷史上，沒有任何一個朝代像唐代那樣，留下了那麼多家喻戶曉的詩人和詩篇，它具有永久的藝術魅力。就閱讀感受而言，

我們在閱讀古代文學作品的時候，往往有這樣一種感覺，就是唐詩情韻豐富，容易背誦，宋詩則佶屈聱牙，不易記住，其他朝代的詩我們涉及的就更少了。有時我們讀了很多唐詩，覺得它好，雖不易說出它好在那裏，但還是千遍不厭地閱讀，這就是唐詩的魅力所在，妙處是它給人以新鮮感。就時代比較而言，「唐詩以韻勝，故渾雅，而貴醞藉空靈；宋詩以意勝，故精能，而貴深折透闢。唐詩之美在情辭，故豐腴；宋詩之美在氣骨，故瘦勁。」（繆鉞，1982，頁36）歷代的學者大多尊崇唐詩，如明代李夢陽「倡言文必秦漢，詩必盛唐」之說（張廷玉，1974，頁7348），魯迅先生甚至得出「我以為一切好詩，到唐已被做完，此後倘非能翻出如來掌心之齊天大聖，大可不必動手」的結論（魯迅，1981，頁612）。也正因為如此，我們學習和研讀唐詩中的經典，才會不斷增加自己的文化底蘊。

就治學態度而言，我們還可以舉兩位著名唐詩研究學者作為範例：一位是復旦大學中文系陳尚君教授，他將復旦大學的「『三十年集』系列叢書」之一命名為「敬畏傳統」，並說：「我一直以謙恭敬畏的心情讀書治學，卑以自持，不斷進取，不敢張狂，不敢稍懈，逐漸得悟學術之一二。」（陳尚君，2011，頁1）另一位是南京大學文學院莫礪鋒教授，他在南京大學舉辦的由兩岸三地及日本、韓國、新加坡等高校參加的「中國語言文學與社會文化國際論壇」開幕式上的演講定名為「請敬畏我們的傳統」，他說：「中華傳統文化源遠流長、生機勃勃，它的內部蘊涵着巨大的生命力。中華傳統文化從生成之初就具備了與時俱進的變革機制，它是一隻可以屢經涅槃而獲得永生的鳳凰。隨着現代社會的種種弊病愈演愈烈，現代人更需要從傳統中汲取智慧，獲得啟迪。……如果你真心熱愛你所從事的中國語言文學研究，就請敬畏我們的傳統！」（莫礪鋒，2009）這兩位學者，一位是就個人的研究經歷傾訴着三十年的體會，一位是就當下的學術現狀表現出自己的憂思，都是對於我們研讀唐詩具有很大的啟迪意義的。

三、經典研讀與批判精神

我們強調對於傳統的認知，並不等於對傳統就是全盤吸收的，我們還必須從當下的視角用批判的精神去審視傳統，也就是在敬畏的基礎上批判地學習。敬畏是表達同情與尊重，批判是不要盲從與迷信，沒有批判的敬畏是盲從，沒有敬畏的批判是輕率。

唐詩儘管有它日久彌新的價值，但也毋庸諱言，如果不能做到批判性的學習，不僅會囫圇吞棗，食而不化，而且會在一定程度上迷失方向。對於批判性學習，我們的體會是要注意以下兩個方面：

（一）唐詩具有強烈的現實批判性

唐詩是孕育於唐代社會現實土壤中的文學現象，是當時現實社會的映現與昇華，詩人們在創作過程中也常用批判的眼光來看待現實社會。有表現憂國憂民者，如杜甫《三吏》《三別》；有揭露權貴腐敗者，如杜甫《麗人行》；有抨擊窮兵黷武者，如杜甫《兵車行》；有控訴橫徵暴斂者，如元結《賊退示官吏》；有反映貧富懸殊者，如白居易《輕肥》；有同情婦女不幸者，如王昌齡《長信秋詞》；有敘寫憤世嫉俗者，如李賀《浩歌》；有抒發失意情懷者，如白居易《琵琶行》。這些詩歌本身都具有強烈的現實批判性，我們在研讀時注意挖掘其深刻的內涵，不僅有助於加深對古代社會的認識，而且有助於進行古今比較，對於當代社會的種種現象進行更為深刻的洞察和反思，理性地對待現實社會所發生的各種問題，從而在閱讀唐詩過程中增強時代感和批判性。

就詩歌本身而言，唐詩也是在批判與繼承的過程中得到發展和繁榮的。詩歌在南北朝的齊梁時代，內容局限於宮廷文學應制詠物的範圍之內，形式受到駢文的影響，過於雕琢，「儷采百字之偶，爭價一句之奇」（《文心雕龍》卷二〈明詩〉）（劉勰，1980，頁35）。唐代

詩人在改造齊梁舊風的過程中，注入了剛健的氣概。比如初唐四傑登上文壇的時候，對綺豔之風加以批判，提出詩文應有「剛健」的「骨氣」，他們或寫江山行旅之思，或述興亡盛衰之感，或吐俠士英猛之意氣，或抒從軍出塞之豪情，憧憬功業，探求哲理，風格雄健，感情充沛。到了陳子昂，則完全擺脫齊梁舊風的影響，對現實有着清醒的認識，對理想有着執着的追求，感情昂揚濃烈，風格質樸勁健。到了盛唐時期，詩壇上出現了百花吐豔的景象，造就了中國詩歌史上燦爛輝煌的黃金時代。

（二）以批判性的眼光審視唐詩

從社會發展的眼光來看，傳統的形成有它的必然性，更體現出民族特色，我們首先懷着敬畏之心弘揚其優秀的文化，其次也要清楚地認識到，傳統與現實是有很大距離的。就唐詩而言，它是在唐代特定的土壤中孕育出來的，因而深深地打上了中國農業社會的烙印，其生成的環境與我們現在的工業化社會具有天壤之別。這樣，我們運用批判性的眼光去審視唐詩，就有兩個方面很值得注意：一是具體內容和表達方式的傳統特色。唐詩是唐代特定歷史時期的產物，運用的是唐人的語言，表現的是唐人的習慣，反映的是唐人的生活，表達的是唐人的觀念，這在很多地方與我們當代相距遙遠，因此我們既不能以唐人的眼光來看待現實社會，也不能用當代的眼光來範圍唐代社會，我們要讀懂唐詩，就要設身處地地體會唐代詩人的語境，以具「瞭解之同情」（陳寅恪語），同時也要與當代的語境進行比較，既不要盲目地迷信古賢，也不要一味地漠視傳統，在這個意義上，批判的精神就非常重要。二是生活認識和靈魂依託的精神啟示。生活在當代的我們，在物質生活逐漸豐富之後，也深深地感到精神文化在不斷地失落，功利、浮華和喧囂充滿了塵世的每一個角落，人們的本真

受到了蒙蔽，人們的靈魂失去了依託，這個時候，我們閱讀一些唐詩，親近一下古人，也就可以在一定程度上避開喧囂而返歸寧靜，避開浮華而返歸淳樸，避開功利而返歸淡泊，以臻於做人的高品位和高境界。

四、回歸經典與文本細讀

重視經典文本的細讀並且進行深度解析，是「唐詩經典研讀」課程所宣導的重要學習方式，也只有如此，才能進一步理解以唐詩為代表的文學經典對於民族文化的發展具有不可替代的意義，也可以通過這種閱讀方式在一定程度上抵消電子時代的快餐閱讀之風、商業社會的浮躁閱讀氣息和應試教育的教條閱讀習慣，從而在一定的時空之中，沉靜於經典文本的閱讀之中，使得自己心靈得到昇華。需要說明的是，文本細讀來源於二十世紀西方文論中的語義學流派，是在文學批評語境下對於作品的深度解讀。我們這裏只是借用這一術語，而並不是原始意義的概念內涵，而是適合於唐詩經典文本研讀的方式。

（一）文本細讀的基礎

要對於唐詩經典進行深度的文本解讀，就必須首先瞭解唐詩形成和演變的一般規律和情況。如體裁特點，唐詩總體來說，分為古體詩和近體詩，古體詩結六朝之格局，近體詩開唐代之新境。但無論是古體還是近體，都非常講求形式美，注重聲律和節奏。其中近體詩尤其重視對偶和聲律。樂府、雜體和歌行在唐詩中既與古體近體相聯繫，又具有相對獨立的地位。再如題材分類，唐詩中各種題材千姿百態，呈現出異彩紛呈的局面，就主觀和客觀而言，有重主觀抒懷的愛情詩和懷古詩，有重客觀表現的山水詩和邊塞詩；就表現主體而言，有表

現婦女情懷的怨情詩，有表現僧道生活的世外詩；就詩人交往而言，有與皇帝唱和的應制詩，有與友朋之間的送別詩等等。又如演變歷程，唐詩總體上隨着時代的推移分為初、盛、中、晚四個時期，在時代變遷過程中，各種體裁、各種題材也都有各自的演變歷程和特點，對這些過程有所瞭解，對這些特點進行把握，才有助於對唐詩經典的深入理解。這樣對於研讀者來說，文學素養的提高就是重要的環節，這種素養包括理論素養、文獻基礎、感悟能力、鑒賞水準、創作技巧等等。同時，研讀者是主體，唐詩經典作為研讀對象是客體，主體和客體的交融是經典解讀的最佳狀態。

（二）文本細讀的深度

對於文本內涵的挖掘，是唐詩經典文本細讀最需要致力的方面，無論是經典名家、經典名篇、經典名著等都是如此。如杜甫的《登高》詩，可以說代表了詩歌語言藝術的最高境界，就句法而言，全詩不僅八句都對偶，而且首二句當句亦有對；就字法而言，不僅平仄極為協調，而且「蕭蕭」、「滾滾」等重字用得極為精當。詩中的每一個字、每一個詞都是經過千錘百煉，無可移易的。林庚先生曾對這首詩的「落木」二字進行深入的解讀，寫成了〈說「木葉」〉一文，以闡述「樹葉」、「木葉」、「落葉」與「落木」的區別和聯繫，並且進一步闡釋「落木」在杜甫《登高》詩中運用的獨特價值：「『木葉』和『樹葉』不過是一字之差，『木』和『樹』在概念上原是相去無幾的，然而到了藝術形象的領域，這裏的差別就幾乎是一字千金。」（林庚，1987，頁289）當然，這僅僅是就一個字生發開來的。總體上說，文本細讀包括文字的細讀，並通過文字的細讀以對詩歌語言進行總體的把握，進而在更大程度上把握詩歌思想，挖掘詩歌內涵，體味詩歌意境，探索詩歌藝術。

（三）文本細讀的層面

文本細讀的層面指文本的多元性解讀，這與文本細讀的深度有着密切的聯繫。前者就廣度而言，後者就深度而言。我們在這裏嘗試選取最經典的名家、名篇、名著作為研讀對象，儘管這些唐詩經典已經被古今人物耕犁過千百度，但是仍然可以從中挖掘出基於傳統的本源意義和對於現代社會具有啟發意義的創新價值。如杜甫《麗人行》詩，我們不僅對其文字表現和語言藝術進行深度解讀，還可以搜羅和利用傳世文獻、出土文獻和域外文獻，將背景探索、名物圖解、繪畫印證等多種方式結合在一起，對於這樣的經典名篇進行多層面和多元化的闡釋，並且將作者的創作主旨和讀者的傳承接受結合起來，將經典的原始價值和當代的文化取向結合起來，從而在研究過程中放寬視野，打開境界。多元解讀的核心也是文本內涵挖掘，但要深入挖掘文本內涵，也必須對與文本有關的文獻進行考索，對社會的背景進行探析，對文化的環境進行檢討，對作者的風格進行追究，這樣才能對於作家作品具有更深層的把握和理解。

五、結語

傳統文化在大學通識教育中的意義，是近年來從事大學教育者都較為清楚地認識到的。但大多也僅僅處於認識的層面，至於通過甚麼途徑去實現，如何在教育過程中落實，在落實中又如何取得更好的成效，仍然是缺乏探討和實踐的問題。我們通過「唐詩經典研讀」通識核心課程的教學和教材的編寫，也認識到教學過程和學術研究在整個社會都在強調和追求創新的大環境下，弘揚和堅守優秀文化傳統和提倡回歸經典是對於民族文化深度閱讀的方式更為難能可貴。中國傳統文化當中還有一脈相承的詩教傳統，從孔子的時候就強調通過詩的教

育、文學的教育，提高教育的境界、擴大教育的影響。對個人而言，詩也陶冶人們的情性，提升人格的精神，對於我們現在的大學教育而言，也能夠在一定程度上擴大學生博古通今的視野。

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對香港中文大學通識教育管理模式的系統思考**

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香港中文大學成立於1963年，在短短幾十年的時間內成長為世界知名大學，其迅速崛起引起了內地高校的極大關注，為內地高校教育改革提供了一個極具啟發的教育模式。在香港中文大學崛起的過程中，一個顯著的標誌就是一直重視通識教育，形成了其獨特的通識教育模式。系統思考是將所處理的事物看作一個系統，觀察其中的元素或子系統及其相互作用，從整體性的角度，協同系統中的各種要素（人、財、物、能量、信息），達到整體最優的目的。從系統思考來分析香港中文大學的通識教育模式，將有助於我們找到高等學校管理「結構模式」的槓桿點，推動高校的通識教育改革。

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一、頂層設計的教育理念

「國家中長期教育改革和發展規劃綱要」中特別指出，深化教育體制改革，關鍵是更新教育觀念，核心是改革人才培養體制，目的是提高人才培養水平。把以人為本、全面實施素質教育作為教育改革發展的戰略主題。我們認為，我國高等教育與國際先進教育水平所具有的明顯差距主要體現在教育觀念上。因為，一所大學的教育觀念就是要回答大學要培養甚麼樣的人（大學生應該接受甚麼樣的教育），進而決定了一所大學如何培養人，即人才培養的模式與機制。因此，深化教育體制改革，關鍵是更新教育觀念。

（一）通識教育的核心理念

通識教育在實踐中不斷演化發展，形成了各具特色的模式，然而，在不同時代或不同大學裏所體現的通識教育的核心理念卻有其共性，在一定意義上形成了完整的理念系統。通識教育核心理念系統可以概括為心靈的熏陶、能力的培養、公民的教育以及專業的培育，這四方面不僅是通識教育的理念和目標，而且也是一所大學的理念和目標。

1. 心靈的熏陶：對人類共享的知識、人文傳統與價值的認知和傳承。

這個理念主要體現在哈佛大學等美國早期的常青藤盟校（Ivy League）對古典博雅教育（Liberal Education）的強調，這種傳統主要是源於英國的大學，特別是牛津和劍橋大學。他們強調大學以培養有教養的自由人（free man）為目標。大學教育的目的應該是提供「心靈的訓練和教養」（the discipline and furniture of the mind）。

2. 能力培養：對學生的思考能力、批判思維以及綜合判斷能力的訓練。

對於通識教育而言，培養和訓練學生的思考方式和思維能力，比學生具體的知識學習更加重要。比如哈佛大學在1945年、1978年和2009年三個階段，明確提出通識教育的培養目標。任何階段的通識教育都強調學生必須能夠清晰而有效地思考和寫作，具有正確的判斷力和批判性的思考方式。

3. 公民教育：一種對學生成為有責任的社會公民的養成教育。

社會公民素質的養成是美國大學普遍關注和強調的。例如，哈佛的《紅皮書》，就明確指出通識教育不是一般意義上的知識教育，它肩負着特殊的使命，是要將學生塑造成有責任感的成人和公民，同時培養學生完善的人格和認識自我及世界的方法。

4. 專業培育：對學生專業基礎與發展潛力的培養。

「大學的生命要靠……通識教育和專業教育來維持」（黃坤錦，2006）。作為現代大學的兩個重要組成部分，通識教育與專業教育是相互兼容的。香港中文大學前校長金耀基認為：「專業化不等於職業化。在不少大學裏，職業化變成了一個主要的行為，大家都要考慮培養的人是否適合職業的需求。而職業化的教育背離了通識教育的目標。」香港中文大學明確提出「要肩負大學教育的使命，就不能單單着重專業技能的訓練；要為社會培養真正的領袖，就應使學生有廣闊的視野、綜觀全域而深入分析的能力、包容異見的胸襟和相當的文化修養。大學要達到這個『均衡教育』的目標，通識教育是一個不可或缺的組成部分。」

二、系統管理模式

「香港中文大學通識教育模式」可以說是一種系統的整體管理模式，這種模式強調整體大於部分之和，着眼整體目的，而不僅僅注意單個要素的優化。從系統動力學出發，系統整體的管理關鍵在於找到社會系統要素之間的連接方式，即系統的「結構模式」，需要審視系統要素之間的非線性關係，把握系統行為的複雜性和整體協同性。

（一）整體思維與系統管理

與整體式管理相對的是反應式管理。反應式管理強調對事件的解釋，只狹隘地注意眼前短期發生的事件，並做出相應的事件判斷，最終得到反應式的結局。比如，很多高校推行的教育政策，往往是短期的跟風行為，包括嘗試開展的通識教育，缺乏系統性的整體設計與傳承，甚至變成名不符實的所謂「素質教育」或巧奪教育資源的手段。

1. 還原論思維與反應式管理的困境

反應式管理的一個顯著特點是僅僅重視系統的要素，這樣的管理模式的哲學方法論就是還原論思維，因此，努力識別各個部分，瞭解這些部分並且逐步從對部分的瞭解發展到對整體的認識（傑克遜，2005）。

還原論思維曾經主導了近代世界，直到現在對我們的思維依然有深刻的影響。然而，在這個複雜、變化、非線性的當代世界，我們依然採用線性的還原思維，已然無法適應所處的環境。社會環境在急速變化，大學教育系統卻反應遲鈍，還原論思維無法解決大學教育面臨的問題，如果總是將系統問題還原為組成部分的問題，將無法真正找到解決系統問題的槓桿點，甚至這種線性還原的解決問題的方法，

比問題本身帶來的結果更糟糕。比如，某些高校試圖通過開展通識教育作為解決大學教育問題的新改革，但卻出現了割裂地生搬硬套歐美或港臺的大學通識教育模式的現象，開設一些似是而非的通識課程，不注重在師資、管理、課程設計等方面的整體設計和協調，無法形成一個通識教育的系統整體。這樣的所謂改革其實是對通識教育本身的背離。

2. 歷史與邏輯相結合的整體設計

「香港中文大學通識教育模式」通識教育課程管理的系統性，體現在合理化的整體設計方面。首先，從歷史維度來看，在1963年建校之初，香港中文大學就將人文與專業均衡教育理念（Balance Education）作為創校宗旨，並開設通識教育課程為所有大學本科生必修。而在後來學校發展的不同階段，始終堅持將通識教育課程作為大學本科教育的核心課程：書院聯邦制下的通識教育課程階段（1963–1976），書院各就其傳統的教育理念與課程安排，自行規劃通識課程；單一制大學下的書院通識階段（1976–1986），學系合併歸大學管轄並負責「學科為本」教學，而書院負責「學生為本」通識教學；系統化之「七範圍」通識教育階段（1986–1991），將課程劃分為七個範圍，顯著增加通識教育學分到18學分，佔中大本科生課業的15%，並委任通識教育主任實施和推動全校通識教育課程；靈活學分制與課程重整階段（1991–2003），1991年本科課程改為靈活學分制，學生可在三年內修滿學分畢業，通識學分減至15學分，重整通識課程，只保留「中國文明」為必修範圍，增加學生選課自由度，在1995年實施「單線撥款預算」，學系經費與教授學生人數掛鈎，通識科目數量大增；課程檢討與「四範圍」通識教育階段（2004–2012），清晰化中大通識教育的目標與要求，重新規劃整體通識課程納入四個知識範

疇，進一步完善「通識課程質量保證機制」，由校內專責委員會與校外專家按時評審課程；建設通識教育基礎課程階段（2012–現在），在2012年，香港中文大學改為四年制，為提供學生共同的學習經驗與互相砥礪的平台，推出全新的通識教育基礎課程，課程分為「與人文對話」和「與自然對話」兩個部分，供所有四年制的新生修讀。從建校以來，中文大學的通識教育課程設計保持了縱向的整體性，形成通識教育的傳統，構建並發揮通識教育課程的系統功能。

其次，從培養「全人」的維度來看，中文大學通識教育的開展並不是割裂的，不是僅限於在本科階段進行，而是形成了一個「通識教育鏈」。比如，從2009年開始的香港「新高中課程」改革，打破文理分流，將通識教育列入必修科目，與語數外並列核心課程，通過通識教育科目考試成為香港中學生進入大學的基本必要入學條件。可以說，中文大學的通識教育課程系統是一種開放系統，與香港整體的教育環境不斷地進行着信息與人員的交流互換，與中文大學通識教育傳統共同形成一個教育系統的整體。

（二）槓桿式領導的協同效益

系統思考指出：微小的、集中的行動，用在合適的地方，有時會帶來可觀的、可持續的改善。系統思考學者們把這個原則叫做「槓桿作用」。槓桿點是指在系統中的某處施加一個小的變化，就能導致系統行為發生顯著的轉變。在解決系統問題的時候，如果可以找到具有「高槓桿效益」的槓桿點，就會帶來整體優化的效果。

1. 起槓桿作用的系統目標

清晰化目標導向是香港中文大學通識教育課程管理系統的一個槓桿點。對於中大通識教育課程管理系統的成員來說，系統目標就是重

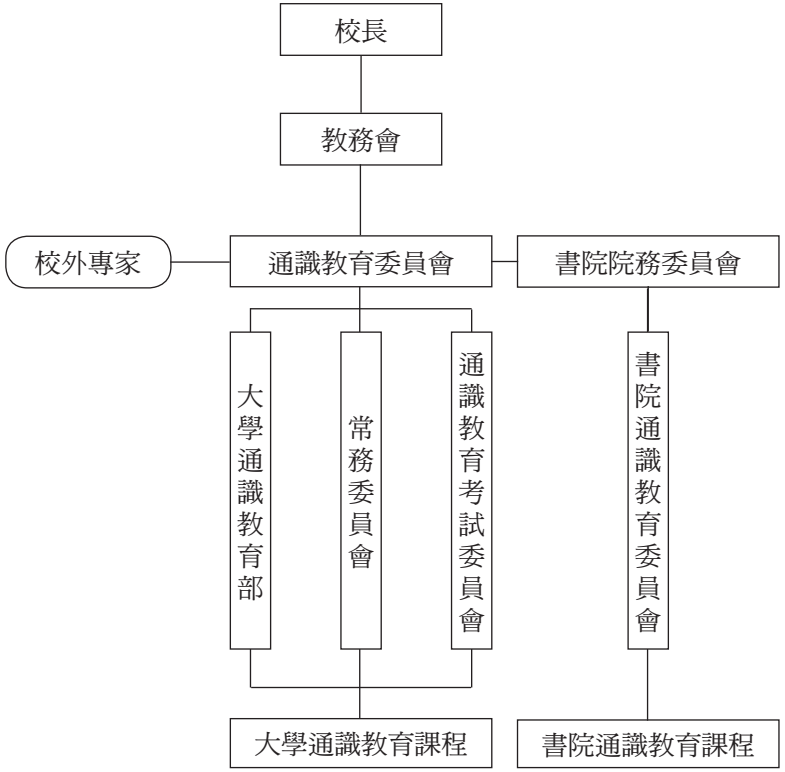
要的槓桿點。系統目標如何起到槓桿作用？首先，成為清晰化共同願景的系統目標引導和激勵系統成員。共同願景是指產生於系統成員的個人願景彙聚並得到分享的願景，而不是高層關起門來寫出的願景宣言。清晰的共同願景會讓系統成員真正投入，而不只是形式順從或報名加入。舉例來說，經過不同階段的反思與修正，香港中文大學形成關於大學通識教育範圍D（自我與人文）的清晰教學目標包括：從更開闊的角度審視自我；理解價值觀和信念的多樣性；面對道德議題，能做出有根據的判斷；能清楚表述自己的道德判斷；能從開放的角度欣賞各類創作；理性思考。其次，過程性的系統目標建設推動和檢驗系統成員的行為。系統目標不是一次性的願景宣言，而是需要領導層自身投入長期建設的動態過程。在此過程中，由上而下的願景熱情將會推動全體成員前進，反覆的願景建設將不斷檢驗校正系統成員的行為，最終形成「整體大於部分之和」的創造性成果。「培養有教養的自由人」這樣的系統目標調節着系統成員的行為，如果這樣的系統目標發生微小的變化，中文大學的通識教育整體課程管理將與當前情況大為不同。中文大學的通識教育將使命及理念貫徹於課程設計中，通識課程的目標及設計清楚地與中文大學使命連結，並已形成完整的課程結構幫助學生廣泛涉獵與共同經驗。以此系統目標為指導，以人類智性關懷劃分的四個大學通識範圍，要求學生在每個範圍起碼選修一科。

2. 規範的通識教育管理平台

香港中文大學設大學和書院兩級通識教育委員會，主席由校長任命，委員包括教務長，大學通識教育主任、副主任，各學院及各書院代表，中大學生會及書院學生會代表列席會議。例如，大學通識教育主任同時也是學科主任，負責監督整個通識課程。設通識教育考試委

員會，負責學生通識教育課程的考核和評定。從機構組成可以看出，中文大學的通識教育組織嚴密、管理有序、靈活多樣，保證了通識教育的質量（蔡景華、吳治國，2006）。

香港中文大學校方的投入和承擔是非常重要的。首先是校方在理念上的支持，高層管理人員對通識教育價值的認同，高層次、有實際影響力的人員加入政策制定單位。其次，校方對通識教育部進行足夠的資源投放，並且保證有三十多名全職管理人員的通識教育部獨立運作，分配到每個科目的資源與主修科同等。



香港中文大學教務會轄下設有通識教育委員會及常務委員會，負責制定大學通識教育政策，審議通識教育科目的開設及修定，並協調

所有成員書院的通識教育課程。成員書院各自設有書院通識教育委員會，負責書院通識教育課程和舉辦以學生為本的教學活動。尤其值得關注的是，香港中文大學成立大學通識教育部（Office of University General Education），這個部門是獨立運作的，由校長委任的大學通識教育主任領導，負責通識教育教學及行政方面的工作。例如，負責執行通識教育委員會及常務委員會的決策，管理整個通識教育課程，統籌由八個學院，共四十多個學系提供的二百多科通識科目，設計並提供通識教育基礎課程。

3. 中西融合的課程設計

香港中文大學的通識課程歷經五十年風風雨雨，未曾有過間斷，但也不斷地隨着時代、社會、大學整體學制的轉變而變動和發展。通識教育課程體系的最新發展階段是通識教育基礎課程和大學通識教育「四範圍」。通識教育基礎課程包括兩個必修科目：與人文對話和與自然對話。大學通識教育「四範圍」包括：範圍A——中華文化傳承；範圍B——自然、科學與科技；範圍C——社會與文化；範圍D——自我與人文。發展中的通識教育課程體系的共通之處，是中國文化範圍必修與西方博雅教育的有機融合。首先，中國文化範圍必修是中大通識類課程的重要特色。中國文化範圍內可選修的科目有中國文化要義，中國文化與社會，中國文化及其哲學等十四門。其次，另外三個範圍的課程選修範圍非常廣泛，年度開出選修課達261門之多，涉及十多個領域，囊括科技、政治、經濟、文化等各個方面。例如，範圍B的科目有心靈、人腦與人工智能，能源與綠色社會等；範圍C的科目有香港與珠三角，現代社會與城市文化等；範圍D的科目有批判思考，哲學與人生，幸福論等。「非課程型」（課堂外）活動有通識沙龍、讀書會和研討會，各書院和學院還有週會、舍

間教育、多樣化輔導活動、訪問學人和藝術家等（蔡景華、吳治國，2006）。在修讀要求和實施方式上，中大本科生通識教育課程為2–3學分，修習一期。畢業一般要求滿21學分，特許專業課程的學生須達到12學分，其中大學通識15學分，書院通識6學分。從2012年起，大學通識包括兩個部分：通識教育基礎課程6學分和大學通識教育四範圍9學分。每門課程學習期大概為十四週，每週兩課時，另每隔兩週有助教負責導修課兩節。學生人數約60–80人，導修課分組人數不多於10人。每節課都備有參考資料，並要求學生閱讀指定參考書、導修文章。導修課通常由學生報告文章，然後分組討論。此外，個別課程還加插輔助活動，如電影播放及討論、雕塑欣賞等。成績評定方面，根據導修與讀書報告或論文、期末考試成績，按比例評分。

此外，香港中文大學實行了嚴格的通識學科審定機制以保證課程質量。例如，從2004年開始特設專責委員會全面審視通識教育課程；對於開設新科目，規定嚴謹清晰的審批要求及明確的諮詢與審批程序；將課程科目檢討作為常設機制，每三年一次對所有大學通識教育科目作整體課程檢討，包括校外評審；進行有效的科目學生意見調查，並與老師、學系的雙向溝通，在老師、同學以至大學其他成員間，建立起理解、重視和關心通識的文化；經常舉辦教學討論會，讓來自不同學系的通識教師交流教學經驗，討論其他與通識教育有關的議題；教務會通識教育委員會於2006年增設通識教育模範教學，以表揚對通識教育教學有傑出貢獻的老師；持續進行有關學生及校友的研究。

2005年，大學通識教育部得到「鄭承峰通識教育及哲學研究基金」捐資，成立「鄭承峰通識教育研究中心」，專責整理和研究通識教育的重要課題，以及統籌相應的學術活動。研究中心於2006年開始出版學刊《大學通識報》，作為華語地區討論通識教育、發表研究結

果、交流彼此資訊的平台。研究中心對校園通識文化的建立，以及促進大學通識教育部與各地高等學府經驗的交流，起到巨大的推動作用。

4. 協同執行的高槓桿效益

「香港中文大學通識教育模式」通識教育課程管理系統包括三種協同執行：一是大學通識教育課程與書院通識教育課程的協同。大學通識教育側重拓寬學生的知識視野，令他們認識不同學科的理念和價值。書院教育則是香港中文大學的一大特色。各書院按其文化背景及理念，為同學提供各具特色的書院通識教育課程。除了正規的書院通識教育科目外，更着重書院生活教育，強調同學的參與、分享及交流。

二是通識教育課程團隊之間的協同，比如不同學院的通識課教師的交流與互補；三是通識教育網絡教學與課堂教學之間的協同，比如運用iTunes U的碎片化學習和Echo 360自動化課程錄製系統。

此外，通識教育管理者協同各方共同構建適於通識教育發展的校園文化。例如，加強與學生溝通，借助新生輔導活動及資訊，向學生解釋課程理念與目標，組織學生小組討論會；與通識老師和其他部門建立夥伴關係，組織老師迎新簡介會、通識午餐聚會、通識教育學術研討會，與圖書館和學生自學中心合作；進行通識教學表彰，設立通識教育模範教學獎，出版通識教育叢書，《大學通識報》特設欄目供通識老師發表教學心得；舉辦讀書會、通識沙龍，設立通識學生論文獎，開辦通識學生研討會。在「鄭承隆通識教育及哲學研究基金」捐資幫助下，香港中文大學通識教育部於2005年成立通識教育研究中心，專責研究與通識教育有關的重要課題，統籌相關的學術活動，以促進各地高等學府實踐經驗的交流。

三、反思與建議

（一）系統變革與動態反思

「香港中文大學通識教育模式」是一種動態的整體管理模式。在相對確定的教育目標和理想下，香港中文大學的通識教育體制，亦隨着香港社會的變遷、文化的轉變和大學本身的發展需要而不斷演變；它在不同時期為響應不同的挑戰與限制而出現、落實（梁美儀，2005）。動態反思強調將「中大模式」看作一種通過反饋形成動態平衡的過程。動態反思的作用主要包括兩方面：調節和增強。一方面，雖然通識教育的內容及管理方式在六個階段中不斷變革，但關於「中大模式」的動態反思不斷反饋調節以保持其穩定的系統目標——培養有教養的自由人。另一方面，動態反思持續地增強「中大模式」原有的特色和發展態勢，形成了反思—改革—檢驗—反思的良性正反饋效應。總之，動態反思是「中大模式」在系統變革中取得動態平衡的關鍵舉措。

（二）問題與建議

香港中文大學的通識教育，一方面負載了五十年的歷史，獲得了無可否認的成就；另一方面管理者和研究者仍在不停地探索，在社會、學校、教師和學生的期望與需求的互動中，尋求更完善地達至通識教育理想的途徑。然而，「中大模式」也要面對通識課程普遍面對的問題，比如說，教育趨向功利化；大學教育以專業為本的觀念難以打破；學校資源分配不均；教育管理制度不健全或部門間的衝突；師生對通識教育的價值認同不一致，以至教與學缺乏清晰的目標。針對上述問題，中文大學在不斷的反思和變革之中，已經施行了一系列的解決措施，例如校方的投入與承擔，建立相關的政策、行政與管理架

構，制定配合大學理念切實可行的課程和嚴格的通識學科審定機制，建立校園文化。

通識教育的現狀與我們關於通識教育的理想目標是有差距的。然而，從系統思考出發，這種差距正是創造性能量的源泉，它保持了通識教育系統管理的創造性張力；要減小張力，要麼讓現實向願景靠攏，要麼讓願景向現實靠攏。能夠實現哪種方法，取決於我們是否堅持自己的願景。內地高校教育改革從不同側面來學習和借鑒「香港中文大學通識教育模式」，往往忽視了一個關鍵點，即「香港中文大學通識教育模式」的多元性和開放性主要來自其系統性。從系統思考出發，我們才可以更好地理解「香港中文大學通識教育模式」。當然，內地高校有其自身條件和環境的約束，需要長期地塑造帶有自身特色的通識教育管理系統。然而，沒有約束就沒有創造，在某種意義上，內地高校教育改革想要創造性地開闢通識教育特色之路，也許恰恰可以在環境和自身條件的約束下實現跨越。

《十八屆三中全會公報》中強調，要深化教育領域綜合改革。無論是香港的高校，還是內地的高校，都要以很大的勇氣進行系統創新。針對香港中文大學通識教育面對的問題，我們主要提出三項建議措施：

1. 設立通識教育改革創新實驗班

設立通識教育實驗班，為通識教育健全發展提供大膽設想、深入研究的創新搖籃。人才培育系統往往是延遲反饋，尤其是像通識教育的價值很難在短期內得以體現，許多通識教育的新舉措也不適宜對全體學生開展，這樣就需要一個通識教育的實驗基地來觀察、測試、培育、檢驗教育過程。在這方面，內地高校中已經進行有益探索的例子。例如，華南師範大學在2001年創立綜合人才培養實驗班，以「寬

口徑、厚基礎、高起點、高要求」為培養理念，以培養追求卓越的跨學科研究型人才為目標，實施2+2培養模式，前兩年以通識教育和學科群大類教育為主，後兩年進行專業主修，綜合班是華南師大最優秀的本科生群體之一。綜合班每年通過高考和面試擇優錄取100名學生，分為兩個理科班和兩個文科班，每個班以25人為上限。其中，理科1班為數理方向，面向數學、物理、計算機、光電等學科；理科2班為化生方向，面向化學和生命科學領域；文科1班為人文方向，面向文學、歷史、哲學、法學；文科2班為社會科學方向，面向經濟學、管理學、教育學、心理學。

2009年，綜合班迎來新的發展契機：綜合人才培養模式創新實驗區獲准教育部立項，獲批國家級「人才培養模式創新實驗區」，成為全國一百個創新實驗區之一。為了進一步推進「人才培養模式創新實驗區」改革，華南師範大學決定在綜合人才培養實驗班辦學的基礎上，從2010年起，增設「勤勤創新班」。勤勤創新班以「求創新、重研究、揚個性」為培養原則，旨在為高層次的研究生教育培養專業學術創新人才，設生命科學勤勤創新班、光電子學勤勤創新班、國學勤勤創新班、數學勤勤創新班、物理學勤勤創新班、新能源材料與器件勤勤創新班、教育學勤勤創新班。學生入學後在勤勤創新班所屬學院進行四年一貫制培養，按本碩七年培養目標設置培養方案。勤勤創新班實施研究性教學、為學生進行科學研究和實踐教學創設更多的機會，注重與國內外名校的合作交流。

2. 打造精品通識課程

師生普遍對通識課程價值認識不足，教師講授和學生學習通識教育課程的積極性普遍不高，很多通識課淪落為「營養學分」，這在一定意義上也影響了整個通識課程的聲譽。同樣，內地不少大學也開設

了少則幾十門，多則數百門的通識選修課。然而，有關調查結果表明，「內容雜、結構亂、質量差、地位低」目前已經成為我國大學通識選修課的通病，並因此導致其「邊緣化」、「次等化」，形成了惡性循環，難以贏得教師和學生的尊重。

打造精品通識課程是提高通識教育地位的必然之路。精品通識課程才能真正地吸引學生，讓學生體會到通識課程的魅力。當然，打造精品通識課程的前提是要打造一支通識課程精品教學團隊，優秀的教師是打造精品通識課程的核心，這也需要校方及管理部門撥出專門經費激勵精品通識課程教師。

3. 建立通識教育職稱評定制度

設立通識教育初級、中級、高級職稱，制定相關職稱評定條件，組織專家委員會對申請者的教學能力、教學效果進行評定，對合格者頒發任職資格證書。建立通識教育職稱評定制度也是將通識教育規範化、制度化的重要步驟。

「香港中文大學通識教育模式」對內地高校實施以人為本、全面素質教育的教育改革具有重要的啟示和引導。借鑒香港中文大學的通識教育管理經驗，內地高校可根據自身的條件和優勢，不斷進行反思變革和系統創新，構建具有自身特色的通識教育新模式。通識教育多種模式的產生會促進通識教育系統的自組織，形成良性互動和反饋，在創造性的張力中實現通識教育的理想和願景。

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稿約
Note for Contributors

一、《大學通識》為學術年刊，致力於建立通識教育研究與溝通的平台，歡迎各界來稿。來稿由學報編輯委員會初審，與專題相關的稿件則會交由至少一位專業評審員進行匿名複審。評審過程一般需時三個月。

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